JERROLD, TENNYSON,

AND

MACAULAY.

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JERROLD, TENNYSON

AND

MACAULAY

WITH OTHER CRITICAL ESSAYS

BY

JAMES HUTCHISON STIRLING, LL.D.

AUTHOR OF 'THE SECRET OF HEGEL,' ETC.

EDINBURGH:

EDMONSTON & DOUGLAS.

1868.

CONTENTS.

PREFATORY NOTE.

OF these Critical Essays, the three first appeared in *Meliora*, the Social Science Quarterly Review, respectively in April 1859, October 1859, and April 1860. The paper on De Quincey and Coleridge appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* for October 1867; and that on Ebenezer Elliott in the Supplement to the *Manchester Examiner* for the shortest day of the year 1850. Advantage has been taken of the opportunity afforded by re-publication for the insertion of certain additions and corrections. Perhaps a reader here and there may like to know that the last paper was written before I had gone to Germany, or even knew German.

J. H. STIRLING.

PIERSHILL, EDINBURGH,
January 1868.

DOUGLAS JERROLD.

"THE Life of Douglas Jerrold," by his son, is an excellent performance. Gracefully affectionate, gracefully filial, it is at the same time candid, modest, and truthful. If one feels always that it is a reverent and loving son that speaks, one feels also that it is a sincere and loyal man. In both respects, indeed, there is that in the book that endears the writer to the reader. Its spirit throughout is gentle and ingenuous; and the whole series of pictures it presents seems, as it were, to lie pleasantly, peacefully distinct in the clear, mild light of an amiable and kindly nature. Well-arranged and orderly, all is lightly, skilfully touched: there is grace in what is said, and there is grace in what is not said. In short, the little book is right acceptable, right welcome. One feels pleased and satisfied that the man finds such a biographer; one feels pleased and satisfied that the father owned such a son.

Besides that knowledge of him acquired from his writings, it is our fortune to have possessed, in respect to Jerrold, just sufficient personal acquaintance to render this life peculiarly attractive to us. It effects for us the rounding of the picture: what was known lends a charm to what was unknown; and the latter points the former. The solemn thought, too, sighs round us like a ghost, that he of whom we read, he whom we knew, has—in the prime of life, when the harvest waved before him, ripe for the gathering—passed from among us, and will no more speak to mortals! And so memories of the past mingle with the pictures of the present, as if to the music of far off, melancholy bells, while feelings rise within us of indefinable regret, of indefinable sadness.

It is these feelings that have prompted—as we hope they will accompany and guide—the following notice.

The parents of Douglas Jerrold were but strolling players, for, even as managers of the theatre at Sheerness, they could hardly arrogate a higher title. That he was born in London (and the date is January 3, 1803) was probably a contingency due to the precarious profession of the family; for it is a fact, as well that the south of England

was its usual *habitat*, as that the infant Jerrold was carried thither in his swaddling-clothes. The first four years of his life, indeed, were spent at Cranbrook, in Kent, where Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Jerrold, patronized and protected by Sir Walter and Lady James, "the great people of Angley," had thankfully set up their modest theatre under the rude rafters of a thatch-covered barn. The earliest impressions, then, of the future wit must have been those of green fresh pastures and tawdry theatrical properties, of fragrant wild-flower and unfragrant tallow, of the simple music of the sheep-bell and the squeak of fife and fiddle. The eyes of the fair-haired, red-cheeked, stout little fellow must have opened round and large over these antitheses, so curiously typical of the main perceptions and leading imagery that characterized the literary efforts of his later years. How strange it must have seemed to him to pass, perhaps on the occasion of a rehearsal, from the fresh common (his little fist full, probably, of buttercups) into that squalid, murky barn, with its spectral rafters, and its skeleton-like benches, and the rough-hewn stage, and the coarse scenery, that should represent in the evening all the grandeurs of the earth! Loving the breezy fields, and the

fragrant hedges, and the fleecy sheep, and the cloud and the blue of heaven, how odd the darned flesh-coloured tights must have seemed to him —the great, glaring, staring, glass jewelry, the pasteboard helmet, the cavalier cloak, the braggadocio boots, the pistols, swords, and daggers!

Nor when, at four years of age, he was removed to Sheerness, could the contrasts and contrarieties that still surrounded him have appeared to this curious and eager little soul one whit less striking. For the green meadows and the woolly sheep he has now the filthy streets and coarse populace of one of the filthiest and coarsest of seaports. In compensation, however, from the window of his lonely room—in which his good granny, for security, while she takes the money at the theatre, locks him up nightly—he can descry, away over the unsightly houses, the sea, and, on its glittering bosom, frigates, queening it, or mightier bulks of war-ships glooming, solid, fast, like castellated keeps of founded stone.

But he is not always confined now to his room o' nights: when such necessity presents itself, he too, supporting some suitable *rôle*, must do duty on the boards. Kean himself, then little bigger or better than a blackguard boy, has, as Rolla,

carried this infant to the footlights. How the quick, susceptible little fellow must have looked and wondered at the scenes he saw! The benches, now no longer ghastly and spectral in the day-light, but filled—filled with such faces!—the oily brown ones of several hundred Jacks, and the blowsy red ones of as many Molls! Then the uproar, the whistling, the bellowing, the quarrelling, and the trampling—the loud comments, and the still louder accompaniments of the spectators! Then the green-room, and the men and women, and their dressing and undressing there! Surely neither variety nor contrariety is wanting here to excite and stimulate. Soon one of these strange men, in that strange green-room, takes interest enough in the willing little lad to teach him his letters; and soon he is able to cheer his solitude, when locked up o' nights, with *Roderick Random* and the *Death of Abel.*

What a strange web of influences it is here given us to see! What strange and contradictory materials must have constituted the thinking furniture of that poor little prisoner! The sheep-bell, and the fresh meadows, and all the sweet scents and sights and sounds of country life are still dear to his memory; and out there, far away

before him, is the mighty sea! But under him are the filthy streets, and the mean houses, and the meaner people! And again, but just at hand, there is that rude playhouse, where the life he knows so well is now at its ruddiest! Then the books he reads, *Roderick Random* and the *Death of Abel!*

We must bear in mind, too, at what an epoch it is he lives; we must bear in mind that these are the days of Austerlitz and Trafalgar; when the armies of Napoleon are dominant on every land, and the fleets of Nelson vigilant in every sea. It is a mighty hour, and the minds of men are mightily stirred. Throughout all England there is but one element, and it is enthusiasm—enthusiasm for our sea-victories and enthusiasm for our sea-heroes—enthusiasm which leaps out in every look, tone, gesture of every man that meets his fellow on the street—enthusiasm that is caught up, shared, and declaimed nightly by every one of those poor actors within the poor little theatre of Sheerness. It is not wonderful, then, that he, too, the quick, spirited little Jerrold should, in such circumstances, acquire a feverish longing for the sea; for it *is* a quick, spirited little Jerrold: no sickly, puny cageling, dying of

the pip, is this, but a stout, vigorous little fellow, with plenty of indignant vehemence in him, and an instantaneous, instinctive impulse, not to shrink when attacked, but to stand up fiercely for himself. The sea and *its* contrasts, then, are the next experiences of little Jerrold; but before we follow him thither we must advert to yet another source of contrast that lay for him in the characters of his parents.

His mother was young; his father was old—older than the very grandmother; for the Mrs. Samuel Jerrold of whom we speak was the second wife of her lord, and the wife's mother was the junior of the wife's husband. It is she, Douglas's mother, who is the soul of the family, the soul of the theatre also; and much reason she has to keep her wits about her, not for the sake of the young ravens only (she has two boys and two girls), but for that of her aged partner also. He, for his part, the good old man, has been cuffed, and huffed, and buffeted in this sad world, and in that sad calling of his, till he is as mild, and meek, and pliant as well-kneaded dough—as limp as manipulated pasteboard—and is content and happy in the quiet of whatever out-of-the-way corner the swirls and eddies of the draught may

chance to sweep him to. He plays any character —Richmond or the Ghost in Hamlet—for his place now is thankfully in any gap that the exigencies of the occasion may present. He is happy, the good, quiet, well-kneaded Samuel, if things will just get along without stopping: he likes the fireside; he likes the repose of a quiet novel; he likes the serenity of a pensive pot of purl. His peculiar glory and his pride, however, the firm fundament of his life in this world, the soil on which he grows—what we may call his secret—is a pair of pumps. Pumps! yes; but then they are the pumps of Garrick; and they are still alive with the energy of the immortal sole. Poor old man! how one sympathizes with him! How one rejoices, as he rejoices, in the rock of those shoes, on which he can so securely found himself! How one delights to know that his poor storm-buffeted bark had such an anchor to let down and ride at! As one thinks of all those cuffings, and huffings, and buffetings, and of the good, limp, pliant nature into which they have pressed, and turned, and kneaded him, one is glad to think that such an undeniable fountain of consolation was conceded him as this of Garrick's shoes.

Douglas does not seem to have enjoyed much attention from his mother. She, poor woman, had doubtless enough to do, for, as the phrase is, all devolved on her; and in after years, while the good, easy old man is left by the fireside, we get glimpses of her flitting busily hither and thither on provincial engagements.

The maternal grandmother, Mrs. Reid, whose maiden name was Douglas, seems to have been the only one from whom little Jerrold received, during the whole of his infancy and boyhood, any regular and special guidance. She seems to have been Scotch; and from her, doubtless, little Douglas inherited, not his Scotch name only, but his Scotch blood also; for that *perfervidum ingenium* ascribed by Buchanan to the Scots was here, south of the Tweed, in the vehement individuality of Douglas Jerrold, as perfectly exemplified as ever, north of the Tweed, in any of the children proper of the ancient Caledonia.

One other point, which must have influenced the thoughts and feelings of our young ambitious aspirant, we must yet notice before following him to his ship—it is the absence of a pedigree. Mr. Blanchard Jerrold, as he says himself, has not "been at much pains to elaborate an ancestral

tree;" the strolling player is traced no further than his own father, a horse-dealer at Hackney; and all the facts of the case are as freely, frankly, and unreservedly stated as it has ever been our lot to witness on the part of any one discoursing in these "old-clo'" days of his own birth and parentage. Still human nature will be human nature; and there is a touch or two here that are human nature itself. We trust, however, that we shall be seen to be merely yielding to the temptation of a naturalist, and not, in reality, unkindly, when we just slightly accentuate a phrase or two in the family legend.

"The son," proceeds the said legend, referring to Douglas's father, the strolling player, "the son of Mr. Jerrold, of Hackney (who was a *large* dealer in horses, *at a time when horses were eagerly sought*, in consequence of the long-continued wars), and *the descendant of yet richer forefathers*, the poor stroller must have remembered somewhat bitterly the fact, to which he often referred, that he had played in a barn *upon the estate that was rightfully his own. More of his family he never communicated to his children.*" There are strokes here that must come home, if not to the consciousness, at least to the memory

of many a reader; but we are sure that all will, as we do, only smile with kindly recognition on the family myth, and respect the family euphemism. As some consolation to humanity in general, however, whether tree'd or treeless, we may hint that there exist few gentle houses, few noble houses, ay, few royal houses, where the family myths are as innocent and the family euphemisms as free from vulgarity.

Jerrold's novitiate in the navy—for, as we have hinted, after some five years of reading, writing, and arithmetic, and just eleven years of age, to the sea he went—was neither of long duration nor of much vicissitude. He entered as a first-class volunteer, and remained but twenty-two months in the service. One year and four months he spent at the Nore, on board a guard-ship; and only during six months had he any experience of active service. We can fancy with what pride, with what hopes, with what aspirations, he first trod the deck of a man-of-war. Still, the gloss of novelty once dulled, the ways of the ship once mastered, and the characters of those around him once comprehended, life on board must have appeared to his eager, restless nature but wearisome and monotonous. The

captain seems to have been kind to him; for he allows him to read Buffon in the cabin, and indulges him in the recreation of a flight of pigeons. Without doubt, also, little Douglas employed unceasingly both those sharp eyes and those quick ears of his, and stored up daily in his memory picture after picture and thought after thought. Still he must have sighed for active service. Whether he liked it, when he had an opportunity of judging, scarcely appears; but it seems he thought it his duty in after life, when consulted by any young aspirant, rather to dissuade than encourage. Life must have been uncomfortable enough, one would think, during the six months that—visiting Ostend, Texel, Heligoland, and Cuxhaven the while—he was tossed in that little brig the 'Ernest,' from the Thames to the Elbe and from the Elbe to the Thames again. His hammock was stolen, and he had to sleep as he could. He had his disgraces and his difficulties, his haps and his mishaps; but no event of any importance distinguished the short career of the little middy. He saw a man flogged—saw and sickened as he saw—and the brutality stuck to his memory. He transports from Belgium a number of the wounded of Waterloo; and has an

opportunity of hearing something of war from those who had seen and suffered.

There are lessons involved here that we find turning up in many a page of the future author. His heart must have been at the bottom very tender; for that lacerated sailor and these wounded soldiers have engraved themselves deeply there. Other lessons, also, he doubtless learned. These were the days of brutal fun, of ferocious jocosity; Douglas was proud, of purer heart and higher intellect, we may believe, than any of his mates, and vehemently indignant at injustice; his frame, too, though stout and active, could not have been brawny: many cruelties must he have suffered, many mortifications borne. If young gentlemen were at all constituted then as they are everywhere now-a-days, his antecedents of birth must have been often enough flung in his face, and awakened in his breast the keenest and fiercest of emotions. The teachings of experience were here in abundance then.

Altogether, though so far as book-learning is concerned, he is as yet not very far advanced, and has no acquirements but reading, writing, and arithmetic, still we may, without hesitation, assert that, as regards insight into this practical world

and the conditions of existence, young Jerrold is wiser, riper, and maturer than many a much older youth who, as yet, has only learned and learned, and read and read, within the walls of schools and colleges.

And conscious of this ripe experience, as well as proud of his increased strength and stature, must have been our gallant little middy of thirteen, as, leaving his ship for ever, he stepped once again ashore at Sheerness to greet his relatives. But, ah! how sad that greeting! Hot tears must have fallen on his cheeks with the kisses of his friends, for to them the world is changed. The theatre is broken up; the family is ruined; the good old manager has no consolation longer even in the shoes of Garrick; for neither he nor they will ever tread the boards again. A sad reverse for them—a fearful reverse for the proud young midshipman! The result is —after two months of an eclipsed existence in familiar Sheerness, while the young wife has gone bravely forth to seek some other resting-place for her helpless children and her equally helpless husband—a migration to London.

Broad Court, Bow Street, where the wanderers found shelter, could have offered no very cheering

aspect to the high-hearted, crushed young middy; but, like some scenes we have seen already, it cut itself deep in his brain, and was stamped, in after days, on many a vigorous paragraph. Broad Court was a *poor* court; and every reader that has seen such has already before his eyes the proper picture. The houses are, of course, wretched, and the population teeming; but the characteristic feature is the children—ragged and dirty, but hot and loud with game or battle in the midst of squalor, filth, and meanness. Jerrold, to be sure, was but thirteen; and, at that age, the heart is usually light, while the memory is but short for anything better or worse than the present: still he was, in intellect and experience, riper, older than his years, and his proud nature must have been deeply galled. Picture him, in such a place, amid such a population, skulking—skulking *from* the door, *to* the door—still in his uniform!

What all this taught Jerrold can be read in every page of his writings. Hitherto, his life has been a life of contrasts: at Cranbrook, at Sheerness, on board the 'Namur,' on board the 'Ernest,'—wherever he has been, contrast has been forced upon him. For Douglas Jerrold, the universe has

been cast on the principle of contradiction; what the Germans call the *Satz* of *Widerspruch* has ruled his horoscope. But here, in Broad Court, it is that the contrast of contrasts, the antithesis of all antitheses, impresses itself on the heart and brain of Jerrold. Here it is that all the mighty meaning of the words Rich and Poor begins to unfold itself. And from this time on, this contrast will continue to impress itself, and this meaning to unfold itself; for pain, privation, labour, will be the constant companions of this proud, eagle-hearted youth for many years yet. Poverty—ignorance, vice, crime; riches—selfishness, insolence, arrogance; the inequalities of fate; the injustices of fortune: these are the cuds he ruminates, till the fierce thoughts of the vehement, indignant man leap into the lightnings of keen and passionate speech.

Meantime bread has to be won; and little Douglas is apprenticed to a printer. Whatever regrets the late midshipman may have felt on this occasion, we may be sure that, in view of Broad Court, the parting with his uniform was not one of them. His, too, is, after all, a susceptible, impressible nature; and he soon reconciles himself to his new position. Nay, he takes a

colour from it: books become mighty favourites with him; and he acquires an enthusiasm for literature. It is probable, indeed, that an enthusiasm of this kind was not difficult to kindle in the reader of *Roderick Random* and *The Death of Abel.* How eagerly, how indomitably, he throws himself on the new pursuits! Early as *the printer* is obliged to go to work, still earlier rises *the student*, and applies himself to his. At meal-times, too, his books undergo a longer mastication than his victuals. Finally, at night, the body, after its twelve hours of drudgery, may be wearied if it will, but the mind shall not; and the evening shall end as the morning began, with books. And what are those books? If it is for his poor old father, now invalided in the chimney-corner, that the good-hearted lad is pleased to read aloud volume after volume of Scott's Novels, it is for himself that he reads Shakespeare, reads him till he has him by heart and can quote every line of him. But there are drier studies necessary for his assumption of a literary position; and these shall not affright him. Burns, in penitent moments, when resolved on steadiness, would return, ever and anon, "to his Latin again." But Jerrold, with greater patience, with greater per-

severance, remained *by* his Latin, and, to a considerable extent, as his whole dialect and general use of words testify, conquered it. Nor Latin only: French, Italian, German, were all in succession objects of study with him, and all of them more or less acquired. Brave, then, as the little midshipman on board the 'Namur' or the 'Ernest' may have been, braver, far braver, we may fearlessly pronounce this wearied stripling of a printer, in his mean little room in Broad Court, with the Latin Grammar in his hand.

We are glad to learn, however, that the due meed of relaxation is not denied him. Orders for the theatres are not rare, as is to be expected, in such a family; and we may readily surmise that one member, at all events, would neither refuse nor neglect them. These are the days, too, be it recollected, of Kean and Kemble; and the aspiring stripling is privileged alternately to glow and quiver before the grandest Hamlets and Othellos the world has ever seen. These theatrical experiences bias his literature: it is for the stage he would write; it is as the guild-brother of Shakespeare he would appear. So to dramas he applies himself. He was only fifteen when his first piece was written; and only eighteen when he had the

pleasure of seeing it performed—when he had the pleasure of seeing it succeed. A very singular and rare experience for so young a lad!

But he is not one-sided in his labours: besides dramatic, there are other literary efforts; and these, too, succeed. Copies of verses he has the bliss to see printed in the magazines; and one morning his master, who seems to have been editor as well as proprietor of a newspaper, puts into his hands, to be set by him in type—"O joy!"—an article of his own! accompanied, too, by an invitation to write again! Surely the world is opening for our brave apprentice, and his fortune near! Ah, no! it is but the gleam of sunshine in the early morning of a dismal day. If in the brain or breast of the successful boy-contributor, of the successful boy-dramatist, any wind of arrogance, any air of presumption have developed itself, most rudely will it be shaken out of him—most bitterly will it be expiated. For there await him years of incessant labour, years of frustrated hope, years of cruel disappointment, before his name shall emerge from obscurity and his place be fixed.

But these bitter experiences shall not be all unsweetened, and these dark days not all uncheered; he shall have a friend, and he shall

have a wife. Of the latter, whom he marries when he is but one-and-twenty, we are not empowered to speak. The son could not with propriety have expatiated on the virtues of the living mother: the tone of the dedication, however, and the affectionate modesty of every word he uses when obliged to speak of her, assure us of the esteem in which he holds her, and supply a basis for that of the public also. Fancy will add the rest. The soothment of young love—the consolation of an absolute sympathy—the strength of purpose inspired by the consciousness of responsibility,—these and all other skiey influences that troop in the train of marriage which the heart has led, each of us shall picture for himself.

But let us linger a moment over the early friend: it is Laman Blanchard, whose grave is now no longer lonely, for that of Jerrold—the friend of his youth, the friend of his heart—lies there beside it. And it is fitting that, dead, they should thus lie near each other, they who, living, were bound together in such intimate and familiar union.

The soft, gentle, Shelley-like Blanchard seems to have looked to his harder, bolder, and more resolute companion, as to the master-mind that

had a right and possessed the power to sway and guide him. His pure, open, unselfish nature directly acknowledges this. In 1826, he writes to Jerrold: "Such as my nature is, it is not too much to say that it has been almost moulded by you; and certainly of late years, nothing has been admitted into it that has not received your stamp and sanction." Then further on in the same letter, it is even with feminine tact that he writes: "If you think I can share my mind with others as I have done with you, let me refer you to a passage in 'Childe Harold,' commencing—

'Oh! known the earliest and esteemed the *most*.'"

There are allusions here and there too in this correspondence, to quarrels and to reconciliations of quarrels, that are particularly instructive and suggestive. It is not friends, in fact, we see; it is a pair of lovers! Blanchard is the lady, and in her loving, innocent spontaneousness, she is perpetually giving unconscious offence to her exacting, irritable, and somewhat perverse lord; she is, ever and anon, startled at his moody jealousies, alarmed by his fierce looks, and full of wonder as to what she had done; her allusions to "jarrings when we meet in company, and a con-

straint when we are alone" are peculiarly touching, and faithfully depict the whole case. It is a pretty love-quarrel, in short, a pretty miff; and from this troubling of the waters we understand both friends better.

We are glad, then, that Jerrold has such friends to cheer his battle—for to him life *is* a battle, and this world the field of a most unequal fight. All the years of his early manhood are but one series of ingrate toils and unacknowledged labours. For magazines and journals he writes scores upon scores of articles; and for the theatres, a whole host of pieces. Of these latter, some fifty have been specially enumerated; and fully thirty seem to have been written before their author could have counted as many years. Some of these, like "Black-eyed Susan," are eminently successful, replenishing the coffers of vulgar, dissipated, greedy managers, but bringing to their author a renewal only of neglect, disappointment, and injustice. Throughout all these years, in fact, up almost to his connexion with *Punch*, in 1841, we see him, a lean, pale, hard, exasperated little figure, standing by a gulf, over which he hopes presently to be able to pass by means of the masses of paper which he flings in; but alas!

the remorseless black maw swallows them all up, like snow, before his eyes; and there burst from his lips the fiery imprecations of a tearful wrath, and the fierce invectives of a scornful indignation. Few authors have ever undergone a more protracted ordeal or passed through a longer novitiate than Jerrold. And when, at last, his bark did—after veerings, and tackings, warpings-in, and warpings-out, in the dirtiest weather and the most intricate of channels—reach the open sea, and the fog rose up and showed the shoals behind and the whole ocean of success in front, it was wonderful to find it still so hale and hearty, still so true and cheery, still so sound and pure at the core, if at the same time, also, it must be confessed, somewhat dull and indifferent, somewhat sceptical and incredulous as to the advantages of the voyage at all, and inclined rather to drop anchor and enjoy the sunshine.

The products of his literary activity during this period need hardly occupy us. In later life, they were, for the most part, condemned as worthless by their own author, who spoke even of the remarkably successful "Black-eyed Susan," and the equally successful "Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures," as trash and lollipop, and desired to assume

the honours of paternity for such works only as "St. Giles and St. James," "Time works Wonders," "A Man made of Money," and "The Chronicles of Clovernook." Even of these latter works, it does not enter within the scope of our design to speak in any detail at present. We feel more occupied with the man than his works, and would use the latter only to demonstrate and illustrate the former. Indeed, it is doubtful if even these latter works possess themselves any very certain germ of an enduring vitality. For the conditions of literature are involved, now-a-days, in processes of transformation that are as yet neither explained nor explored; and there is now the ever-increasing possibility of the existence of both talent and genius—clothed, too, in forms that, two or three generations ago, would have appeared marvels magnificent as palaces of Aladdin—but without the least chance of either eminence or permanence of place in the progression of the ages. Every reader of experience is aware of examples even in the great world; and there is hardly a circle in the kingdom but can point to literary powers that seem but as seed flung on the rocks or dropped on the roads. And, indeed, it is surprising with what equanimity

they who recognise and lament the injustice acquiesce in the arrangement, and neglect the neglected. That this may be the fate of Jerrold, is, at least, to be apprehended. His prominence in the world was certainly attributable rather to extrinsic than intrinsic causes, though, of course, the latter are even prodigally present. At all events, we may say with assurance that, on the whole—despite one or two exceptions, which are themselves but temporary, perhaps—Jerrold's literary works have never struck deep root into public estimation, or enjoyed any very extended genuine popularity. Jerrold, no doubt, issued from that laborious novitiate of more than twenty years a finished literary athlete, agile, supple, swift, with the power of accomplishing the most astonishing feats, as it were spontaneously, almost involuntarily. Certainly the sinew of writing had, by that terrible practice, developed itself, as he said himself, "like the smith's arm." But were there no drawbacks to this marvellous facility, no shortcomings in this wonderful ability? Are there no such things as the evils of premature, are there no such things as the evils of incessant authorship? Is it true that the more a man writes, the better and ever longer the better he

will write? Is it true, that the sooner he begins the better he will end? We doubt both positions; we doubt the advantages of a man becoming a literary athlete at all, unless, indeed, his function be a mere matter of business, and his place that of scribe to some daily or weekly journal. If a man have any higher possibility than this in him—if it is to the giant, Genius, that he is to give birth—it is certainly not by becoming a literary athlete that he will accomplish his deliverance in any adequate or satisfactory form. The feats of the one athlete, like those of the other, however dazzling their facility, have only a temporary and extrinsic value; their secret too is soon discovered, and the repetition palls.

We have done our best to love the writings of the brave Jerrold; but images and ideas like these will ever intrude, and we wander from the book to theorize endlessly on the evils of premature and professional authorship. And yet we admit at once that Jerrold is a writer who has widely influenced the literary, political, and social opinions of his period; that he is an able writer, a vigorous writer; a man as dexterous with his pen as any master of fence with his rapier; a coiner and utterer of richest, raciest, subtlest say-

ings. We admit, too, that with the names of Dickens and Thackeray that of Jerrold also must be always associated; but even while conceding him this parity of place beside both, we assert that this place has mainly a mere external foundation, and that his writings have never exercised a tithe of the influence or acquired a tithe of the renown of those of either.

Like that of some of the wits of the bygone century, his fame, indeed, may, at the last, prove an affair of tradition rather than document. He is essentially, even in his best writings, the sayer of good things, of strong things—the wit of clubs. His works are not so much carefully-meditated, carefully-elaborated, carefully-finished literary wholes, in which the fervid soul of an original author has accomplished the embodiment of the deep feelings and deep thoughts which he knows to be his own, which seem to him to have been born with him, which seem to him to live and move in him, tormenting him to speech—not so much these as collections rather of hard, sharp, effective hits in words. He writes, *saccadé*, as if in blows. We feel as if we had to do with a master of attack whose rapid upper-cuts and unexpected back-handers were perpetually surprising and

confounding us. His style and manner faithfully reflect his experiences, and declare him to have been a fighter, a bitter fighter, against adverse fortune and opposing circumstances. As we said already, contrast reigns; contrast is his secret. Of the three laws of association, one has no difficulty in deciding which it is that dominates the thoughts of Jerrold. It is from the perception of contrast that he rises on the wings of scorn and indignation to dart the lightnings of his epigram, and scatter lavishly the imagery of antithesis.

How keen he is, how bright, how swift, how polished! the points in his writing are like the points of needles. One feels sometimes, indeed, as if Jerrold thought in needles—wrote in needles. His very handwriting, "smaller than printed types," seems to have been the work of just such an implement. But if Jerrold dealt in needles, one must say it was a trade he was driven to. One could not eat the bread of the flinty Davidge or the brassy Elliston without being converted largely into iron; whence it would be some solace to fabricate needles wherewith to pierce these false giants to the core. How beneath the swift puncture of the all but invisible weapon they must have winced and winced again!

But his living depended on these giants; and this was the secret of his defects both as man and writer. Oh, it is fine work to fight a giant, but most miserable bondage to eat the bread of a giant! Under such bondage, the brightest, bravest soul will become at length hardened and embittered. Under such bondage, the very richest writer will become poor; for the necessities of the moment press; he must write and write—and ever for the same poor pittance—till all the germinal thoughts of his fresh young mind are wastefully dug up and scattered, to die of inanition, over a score of reams, leaving at last, for the enchanted palaces he had projected and the big soul he had hoped to grow to, nothing without him but an endless chaos of piecemeal stones, and nothing within him but—the trick of the trade!

Such is the result of extempore literature. When success arrives, all one's Promethean fire is well-nigh burned out; one has well-nigh ceased to believe in it; there are no longer any of those cherished secrets in the heart for which one hoped a glorious utterance. Literature is no longer a realm of Faery; no longer a magic region, in which one's young resolves are all at

length accomplished; in which the mighty good one planned is now achieved and realized; in which one stands up to one's full height; in which one pours out, in free and unimpeded accents, one's whole glorious inner being. It is now a trade; a thing dull, dead, mechanical; it no longer glows, it is made to *seem* to glow.

One has written so much, too, that one learns economy. A thought is not to be lost, at so much a page. We no longer *dart* an idea; we seize it as it rises; we turn it and twist it; we smite it and strike it; and so long as one spark will leap, or one clang ring, we will continue to strike it and smite it. We know that figures in our fingers are tortured ghosts; we hear them cry to us: "Let me go now, then!—have you not done with me yet?—for mercy's sake, good sir, let me pass!" An example will explain this:—

"Jingo was born for greatness. He had in his character the great element of a great general—a great statesman; marvellous self-possession. Meaner boys would have been in a flutter of impatience; not so with the pupil of Tom Blast. Hence, he sat under the bed, with critical ear, listening to the hard breathing of the drunken man, who soon began to snore with such discor-

dant vehemence that Jingo feared the sleeper might awaken his bottle friend, Mr. Folder. Jingo knew it not; but his testimony would have been very valuable to Mrs. Tangle; for the snoring of her husband was one of the disquietudes of that all-suffering woman; the rather, too, that the man constantly denied his tendency to the habit. He never snored. Of course not; nobody ever does. Now Jingo might have been a valuable witness on the side of Mrs. Tangle, who could never succeed, talk as she would, in impressing her husband with a sense of his infirmity. On the contrary, her accusation was wont to be repelled as a gross slander; an imputation unworthy of a wife and a woman. It is bad enough to endure an evil, but to have the nuisance treated as a malicious fiction makes it intolerable. And Mrs. Tangle felt it so. Of this, however, by the way. Return we to Jingo.

"With knowing, delicate ear, the child continued to listen to the stertorous agent. At length, the boy crept from beneath the bed, and treading as lightly as a fairy at a bridal couch, he made his way to a window. Now, had anybody attempted to open it for any honest purpose—had Molly, the maid, for instance, sought to raise it

merely to give her opinion of the moon and the night to any rustic astronomer below—it is very certain that the window would have stuck, and jarred, and rattled; it was too old and crazy to be made a comfortable confidant in any such foolish business. Ten to one, but it had waked the mistress of the Olive Branch, who would inevitably have nudged the master. And now a robbery was to be done—a most tremendous robbery—perhaps to be further solemnized by homicide—for who should say that the Parcæ, who wove the red tape of the life of Tangle, attorney-at-law, were not about to snip it?—who shall say that so awful a crisis did not at that moment impend—and yet silently went the window up; easily, smoothly, as though greased by some witch; smeared with fat 'from murderer's gibbet.' It is a pity that the devil makes evil so very easy to the meanest understanding.

"Two or three minutes passed, not more, and Tom Blast thrust his head and one of his legs into the chamber——"[1]

We shall be glad if the reader turn up and read at greater length the original for himself. Our limits will not allow us a longer extract:

[1] From "St. Giles and St. James," chapter xxii.

we hope, however, that, such as it is, it will suffice to render our remarks intelligible, and that the method and secret of Jerrold's progression in composition will now rise up more or less clear to every reader. The snoring, it is seen, furnishes one paragraph, and the opening of the window another. Then it will be found, that two other paragraphs of similar digressive moralities contrive to unwind themselves, while Tom Blast is kept astride of the window-sill. And even when allowed to descend, access to the money is still, and for a long time yet, denied him. The robber, like the author himself, is not at all in the smallest hurry; he, too, must moralize. Light in hand, he considers Tangle with the most meditative calm; a vein of philosophic reflection develops itself in the housebreaker; and so, paragraph after paragraph, now in soliloquy and now in dialogue, continues to evolve itself out of the most extraneous material. The writer, in fact, seems to be thanking heaven for every new stick, stone, or straw he can lug into his service; and it is only after full eight pages of mere moralization that the information is finally vouchsafed us that Jingo, having been concealed under the bed, opens the window to Tom Blast, who, forcing the closet containing

the gold, succeeds in robbing Mr. Tangle while asleep drunk. Is it at all wonderful that we should get impatient at such a manner of telling a story? Is it at all wonderful that, again and again, in the course of these eight pages, the reader, on the rack, longing for a step, a stir, a move forward of any kind, should exclaim with Hamlet: "Begin, murderer; leave thy damnable faces, and begin"?

Nay, the author himself appears to side with the reader, for he says: "The thoughtless reader may deem it strange—unnatural—that a man about to perpetrate gibbet-work should thus coolly delay, and after his own fashion moralize. But then the reader must ponder on the effect of long habit. In his first battle, Julius Cæsar——." And then we have another digression; and so, after all, it is not the position of the reader that is improved, it is that of the writer—by another paragraph! Let it be understood, however, that we do not deny the quality of the writing as writing; it is always hard, firm, terse, clear, transparent, admirable writing. But then, it is *only* writing; it is not thought. The skill is great; but then it is *only* skill: it is not art; it is *business*.

We have not chosen our extract with malice prepense; we took it at a venture. Jerrold's manner of writing will be found, throughout his works, generally similar. If there be any exception it is in the inaugural chapters, which, for the most part, are written freshly, flowingly, triumphantly, as if from a full heart and a full soul. Jerrold, indeed, is always buoyant, elastic, alert at the start: he is not long-breathed, however; he soon flags—inspiration fails, and work grows drudgery.[1] Then it is that the writing becomes similar to that which we have quoted. It looks artificial and mechanical; the deft hand turns it and turns it till it shines again, but the *hand* seems only there; the *heart* seems otherwhere: the heart, in fact, seems to be constantly saying to itself: "This *is* weariness of the flesh; this *is* but the trick of the trade: if I had my own will it is not here I should be sitting, playing upon words and ringing the changes upon sentences!"

[1] Jerrold started a monthly magazine and a weekly newspaper. The course of these ventures will be found to corroborate what is said above. We may add that Jerrold's politics, as seen in these publications, also illustrate the man. On the great questions of the day, on politics proper, he feels out of his depth; before he can speak, he requires some anecdote, some sally of general humanity, some concrete case, just or unjust, to give him at once a meaning and a purpose.

We find Jerrold himself confessing this in loud soliloquy to the reader. In chapter xii. of "St. Giles and St. James" we find him talking quite misgivingly of the whole trade of fiction-spinning; of what we once named novel-*blowing.* He there, of his own tale, asks doubtingly, "if this small toy of a history may be allowed to have important moments!" But his thought is more explicitly stated here: "All this delay, we know, is a gross misdemeanour committed on the reader of romance: who, when two lovers meet, has all his heart and understanding for them alone, and cares not that the writer—*their honoured parent, be it remembered*—should walk out upon the foolscap *and begin balancing some peacock's feather on his nose.*" Novelists, it must be confessed, are seldom honest enough to avow their own views of their own industry, and disenchant their readers in this plain fashion. This sentence, in fact, if taken with the context, will be found quite crucial; and it needs only to read "lovyers" for "lovers," and "parients" for "parents," to show up the inherent bosh of the whole business. So far as Jerrold is concerned, there is a tone of fatigue in the whole passage: we see the weary scepticism with which he views the vanity and

inanity of spinning those ropes of barren sand that now-a-days are misnamed novels: we see the bitterness and dissatisfaction with which he recognises in his digressions and moralizations but the balancing of a feather and the trick of the trade. In such state of mind it is no wonder that his analogies are often so remote and distant that they appear impressed—crimped—*vi et armis* crimped into his service; and that the writing seems, at times, a precipitate, exasperated spurt, as if the author, in sudden resolution, had dashed the rowels into his own flank.

We do not contemplate here any regular and complete criticism of Jerrold's writings; but we must remark, in passing, that the characters and conduct of the story display faults quite similar to those we signalize. The characters are never creations, and seldom portraits: these Jerichos, and Cuttlefishes, and Canditofts, and Capsticks, and Bright Jems, and Tom Blasts, have no life of their own; they have the life only of their author; they are but his puppets, and discourse at his motion and in his dialect. The conduct of the story in general may be understood from the extract we have already quoted. The incidents are few; each is made the most of, nor passes

till its ultimate drop is wrung. The finale is merely arbitrary, and, as is to be expected, comes at last by a simple pulling down of the curtain.

In fact, we are carried always back to the evils of premature authorship. When Jerrold reached middle-life, and had acquired his audience, he was already *blasé;* he had now no longer enthusiasm, and hardly hope. Sitting there at his desk, and having with ready alacrity and prompt vigour stamped with his own brand the living interests and current topics of the day for the columns of *Punch*, it was only with unwillingness, we fancy, that he turned him to his other writings. These things in *Punch* were alive; they had the red blood of the day in them: but those others, the creatures of his fancy, in his other and apparently more proper tasks, were but pale abstractions. The world was no longer what the golden boy had dreamed it was. His illusions were all gone. The evils of life were too gigantic; he heard them roaring all too unappeasably around him: he could no longer believe in a transforming "Presto" of the pen. His fancy was no longer an inspiration; it lay in his hands a tool—a tool that he could most dexter-

ously use, but still a tool. Ever to cut and carve out weapons wherewith to pierce the wrongs he could no longer hope to redress, was irksome to him. His past lay behind him like a fearful dream. Why should he work? he thought. Had he not worked enough?—and he shivered. No; there in *the club* was the ruddy reality of life; *there* were living men to speak with; there were opportunity and matter for living thought and living speech. So the club became his arena, and the solitary chamber, deserted of the enthusiasm that once had made it bright, was chill to him as the cell of monk.

The estimate we have thus put upon his writings may appear to many much too narrow, much too niggardly. We may seem to have flung but coldly, summarily, into the scales the products of a life for which we professed so much sympathy. Formal criticism has not been our object, however; and we hope that, while endeavouring to trace in the tissue the thread derived from the prematurity and necessity of the authorship, we have not unduly depreciated the signal and essential merits of the tissue itself. To that tissue, genius, as well as talent, has set its stamp; and it is heavy with gems with which, hereafter,

many a pilgrim will seek to decorate his own plainness. The reader, we think, will easily discern withal that, even in the discussion of his literature, we have really been working at the figure of the man, and that that figure has now received its final and concluding touch. Yes; *that last glimpse of him, as he turned his back upon his study in haste to reach his club,* is the finish of the picture as we designed it. We believe the reader to have it in his power to see now the whole growth and history of the character of Jerrold. For from this time out his career offers no vicissitudes but those of literary life in general, and is unmarked by a single salient incident. Why chronicle his changes of residence, his changes of theatres, his changes of periodicals, his changes of clubs, his changes of trips and tours? Each series but marks the road he travelled from penury and obscurity, through toil and suffering, up to affluence and fame. It is not our part, either, to follow him to that last dinner at Greenwich; and still less is it for us to intrude our presence into the sad and solemn scene of the 8th of June 1857, when the brave soul, surrounded by his loved ones, whispered, "This is as it should be," and passed away.

One word of personal reminiscence, however, shall here be added.

It has been said, that "if every one who had received a kindness from the hand of Douglas Jerrold flung a flower on his grave, the spot would be marked by a mountain of roses." The present writer is one of those who has received such kindness; and he, too, would fling what flower it is his to bring upon the grave.

The prospectus of the *Shilling Magazine* had reached me, busy with professional avocations, in the heart of the iron district of South Wales; and its calm, high, generous tone of universal sympathy, hope, promise, spoke at once to my inmost feelings. The first number corresponded to the promise of the prospectus, and I could not resist penning and transmitting an article to the editor. In a few days after despatch of my paper, I was surprised by the receipt of a small note in a hand unknown to me—in a hand altogether unexampled in any correspondence I had yet seen. In motion evidently facile, fluent, swift—swift almost as thought itself—it was yet as distinct in its peculiar decisive obliquity as if it had been engraved—sharp and firm in its exquisitely minute fineness as if the engraving implement

had been the keenest of needles. "Surely," thought I, "the Iliad in a nut-shell is now conceivable."

It may readily be supposed that I opened and read this note with no inconsiderable curiosity. There it is now before me, that little note, in its browning envelope, the delicate trenchant tracery of the superscription confessing to the action of the river of time. There it lies before me, and all the emotions it excited are fresh again within me, fresh as when on the outside of that well-known post-office, in that well-known Welsh iron-valley, I first opened and read it. Surprise was not confined, however, to the outside only; for if, on turning to the inside, gratification predominated, surprise still held its ground. What experience I had yet had of applications to the editors of magazines, had been all so different, that surprise, on this occasion, could hardly yield even to the gratification.

The reader shall have it, this little note. It ran thus :—

"*January* 24, West Lodge, Putney.

"Sir,—I have the pleasure to inform you that your paper, the ——, will appear in the next number. Should you feel inclined to favour me with other papers, it would be desirable that I

should have them as early as possible in the month.—Yours faithfully,

"DOUGLAS JERROLD."

This little note, with a few others from the same hand, I cherish with peculiar care; not, I am sure, to the disapprobation of the reader.

I had sent my article in the middle of January, and had expected no notice of my communication even in the February number. I had looked to the number for March as likely to contain the word of acceptance or rejection; and here, before I had even seen the advertisement of the contents of the new number, was a polite acknowledgment of acceptance from the editor himself, and with an invitation to send more!

I had only twice the pleasure of seeing Douglas Jerrold; the first time, in May (I think) 1846; and the second time, in April 1847. On both occasions I found him in that pleasant residence on Putney Lower Common, which his son so well and so lovingly describes. On the first occasion, his first words to me were, "Why, I had you in mind this very day;" and he proceeded to tell me of his newspaper, which he was then planning, and which made its *début* in the following July. On

both occasions he was as open, cordial, and unaffected as if it was an old friend he was receiving, and not a person comparatively unknown to him. He moved, talked, laughed in the most perfect spontaneity of freedom. There was not a particle of the "snob" in him; not a breath of the *bel air qui s'apprend si vite*, and of which some of his contemporaries—and even those who have distinguished themselves the most by felicitous persiflage of said *bel air*—are yet signal examples. No; Douglas Jerrold was no "snob;" he was a child of nature, as free, and frank, and unconstrained, and so as graceful as a child. He did not seem, as some do, to mutter "gentleman" to himself, and stiffen himself up into the due attitude and aspect. He seemed never to *think* of being a gentleman, never to *try* to be a gentleman, and yet—though it cannot be said, perhaps, that he had all that delicacy of feeling that results only from that equality of respect for others and respect for one's-self which only the true gentleman possesses in sweet equilibrium within him—he can be very warrantably named, gentleman. It is to be considered, also, that these two species of respect, thus in calm neutrality of union, but with graceful oscillation now to this side and now

to that, hardly finds a favourable bed in the breast of a literary man; for a literary man generally feels himself all too specially an *ego*, a particular and peculiar "I," and dreams ever of his own proper mission, to the disparagement frequently of that of all others.

But be this as it may, there was not a pin's point of affectation in Douglas Jerrold: he was natural, simple, open as a boy. He chatted away, on the occasion I speak of, in the liveliest manner, gaily, frankly, unconstrainedly, and made no secret either of his thoughts and opinions, or of his predilections and antipathies. And I must not forget to add—for I have heard of accusations against him in this respect—that the first time I called, he wrote out, quite unasked, and even as he chatted, a cheque, as compensation for two or three articles I had sent him. He gave me, also, a copy of "Clovernook," showing me, with some pride, a translation of it in German, and expressing the decided opinion that it was his best work.

During both visits, passages in his own history were as freely communicated as descriptions, anecdotes, and personal traits of his contemporaries. We talked of Carlyle: he could not say he liked his style, but he honoured him, for he

was a man thoroughly in earnest, and had at heart every word he wrote. Did Carlyle come out among them? Yes: he was not quite an anchorite. He had met him at Bulwer's. They had talked of Tawell (the murderer of the day). He (Jerrold) had said something about the absurdity of capital punishments. Carlyle had burst out: "The wretch! (Tawell) I would have had him trampled to pieces under foot and buried on the spot!" "But I (Jerrold) said, '*Cui bono—cui bono?*'" This little anecdote made quite an impression on me. As Jerrold related it, his eye seemed to see again the whole scene; his features assumed the look they must have worn, and his voice the tone it must have possessed on the occasion; and he seemed again to be holding his breath, as if again taken suddenly by surprise. To me, too, the whole scene flashed up vividly: the vehement Carlyle, all in fuliginous flame, and the deprecating "*Cui bono?*" of the astounded, not then vehement Jerrold; the stronger, broader conflagration appalling the weaker and narrower.

The house at Putney seemed just the house a literary man would choose. It lay there on the very hem of the green common, apparently, to me, the very utmost house of the very utmost suburb

of London. The study into which you entered almost directly from a very comfortable sitting-room, was itself a most comfortable apartment, well sized, well lit, well furnished, and the walls well covered with books.

Jerrold surprised me by the exceeding shortness of his stature, which was aggravated also by a considerable stoop. I do not think he could have stood much over five feet. He was not thin, meagre, or fragile to my eye however. His foot seemed a good stout, stubby foot, the hand not particularly small ; and he had quite a stout appearance across the chest. Then the face was not a small one : he had a particular broad look across the jaw, partly owing, probably, to the complete absence of whisker. The upper lip was long, but the mouth remarkably well formed ; flexible, expressive, moving in time to every thought and feeling. I fancied it could be sulky, and very sulky too. But I said as much when I described his character as Scotch : for what Scotchman—ourselves inclusive—is not sulky? His nose was aquiline and *bien accusé*. His blue eyes, *naïf* as violets, but quick as light, took quite a peculiar character from the bushy eyebrows that overhung them. Then the fore-

head, well relieved by the masses of brown hair carelessly flung back, was that of genius—smooth, and round, and delicate, and moderately high; for gigantic brows, colossal fronts, are the perquisites only of milkmen and greengrocers.

Altogether, the stature excepted, Jerrold's physique was such as any man might be proud of, and corresponded very admirably to the rapid, frank, free soul that worked within it. He was closely, smoothly shaved, and showed not a vestige of whisker. He was well, and even, I thought, carefully clothed; his linen scrupulously clean, and the trousers strapped quite trimly down on the patent-leather boot.

The second time I visited him he was kind enough to drive us (an American with weak eyes had dropped in) up to town. During the ride he was particularly chatty and agreeable. He told us of "Black-eyed Susan" and Elliston; of his early marriage and difficulties. We had the anecdote of the French surgeon at Boulogne, who insulted his rheumatic agonies with "*Ce n'est rien*," and got his retort in return. We had erudite discourses on wines, and descriptions of pleasant places to live in. He told us his age. He talked of the clubs. He named his salary from *Punch*

He related the history of that publication, and revealed the authors. He pointed out which articles were his, which Thackeray's, and which Tom Taylor's. He spoke of Percival Leigh. We heard of Clarkson Stanfield, and Jerrold's own experiences as middy. He chatted of Dickens, Thackeray, Leigh Hunt, Tom Taylor, and Albert Smith. Of all he spoke frankly, but discriminatively, and without a trace of malice or ill-nature. In answer to the inquiry, "What like was Thackeray?" he said: "He's just a big fellow with a broken nose, and, though I meet him weekly at the *Punch* dinner, I don't know him so well as I know you." Dickens he mentioned with the greatest affection; and the articles of Thackeray and Tom Taylor were praised in the most ungrudging fashion. No doubt Jerrold's feelings were quick and his expressions hasty; no doubt he could say bitter things and savage things; but still I believe his nature to have been too loyal to admit either of envy or jealousy.

And so we came to Trafalgar Square; and there we parted. And I see him now as I saw him then, when he turned his back and climbed the stairs of the Royal Academy. I did not think then it was the last time I should see him. I did not think then that, one day reading the *Times*

newspaper in the Museum Club of Heidelberg—the window open, and bright in the intense sunshine the mountain opposite—the tidings of his death would come on me with a shock. I did not think then that, returning from a six years' sojourn on the Continent, one of the first places I should visit in England would be Norwood Cemetery, to seek out there the grave of him who had once been kind to me, and to find it only by a reference to that of Laman Blanchard. (For in the September that followed his death I could see no memorial of the earth that held "so dear a head.") But so it was fated. And so, calling up again the short figure, and the bowed neck, and the face so swift and eager that the hair blew back—thinking again of the free, sailor-like nature that despised convention and detested cant, of the sensitive heart, of the liberal hand, of the simple, loyal impulse that made his movement straight—I fling this, my flower of grateful recollection, on his grave, and cry, Farewell! Brave, frank, impulsive, generous Douglas Jerrold, farewell! Thou surely, if any man, didst thrill to the poetry when he called—

> "Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
> The faithless coldness of the times;
> Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
> Ring in redress to all mankind."

ALFRED TENNYSON.

To that elemental and essential poetry, the ideal of which both poets and critics of poets must, as their own sacred fire, entertain within them, few men have ever clomb nearer than Alfred Tennyson. The reedy outskirts of the Muses' haunt are not nigh enough for him; he must attain to their great presence, he must penetrate into the very lustre of their own inmost sanctuary, returning to us, like the priest from behind the veil, transfigured, luminous. With him, image, emotion, music, which are as the three colours in the rainbow of the poet's thought, lucidly collapsing, orb into song that, heaving, lifts us too on the proud wave of its own rhythmic movement. Minstrels we have had, grander, "fuller," perhaps, than he; souls of a larger reach, hearts of a mightier pulse, but never a poet richer, never a poet truer. Finer gold, art more delicate, are nowhere else procurable; and the result is so

consummate, that clumsy fingers seek in vain to grasp it. It is a shell most exquisitely white, filling to the lustre of a most golden sea; such a shell as the poet himself found on the Breton coast; "made so fairily well, a miracle of design; frail, but of force to withstand, year upon year, the shock of cataract-seas."

The clumsy fingers that seek in vain to grasp it would petulantly crush it;—for coarse are the majority of the criticisms that we have seen of this most genuine poet. Dull redactors transmute his delicious melodies, his most delicate and divine simplicities, into their own pasteboard prose, and then cry out, "Look at it! Do you call that poetry?" The divinest gift of God, the most beautiful and loveliest of the skiey messengers vouchsafed us now, has been rated like a schoolboy that had stolen apples, before the desk of some tumid editor, who knows only the heaviest scale, making there too a mistake so egregious that the dim thought of it will haunt him.

Ah yes! this delicate loveliness has borne the shock of uglier monsters than the "cataract-seas;" slippery creatures have slid over it, and mere organic slime—that can but sting—has sought to hide it from the sun. But "now has

descended a serener hour," and in the great choir of voices that proclaim their joy over it, the sneers of envy and the ineptitudes of incapacity are alike unheard.

Poetry, of late, presents itself, for the most part, in affiliated series. Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge, to go no higher, come in a group from the Percy Ballads, Burns, and Cowper. Shelley affiliates himself to Coleridge, Keats to Shelley, and Tennyson to Keats. Three is the sacred number, the fundamental figure, the foot that scans the rhythmus of the universe. *Omne trinum perfectum rotundum*; all good things are three; and poets, as among the best, are no exception. But of all poetic triads, the last surely is the richest, the happiest, and the completest. Shelley, Keats, and Tennyson! No, not even in their own verses can we find a more harmonious and triumphant triplet. They are the Three Graces of English literature—our trinal Catullus—and should never be found apart. They should be bound in a volume, whose very title—Shelley, Keats, and Tennyson—were poetry.

"What!" we hear the commoner critics cry, "do you dare to rank among dead and accepted classics, a mere living aspirant?" Not only that,

but we dare to say that this living aspirant, as the ripest of the triad, must take precedence of these, his otherwise equal fellows. As completed bard indeed, and in consideration (with special reference to Wordsworth) of the richer humanity and wider universality of his range, Tennyson, perhaps, transcends the whole series of poets that separates him from Milton.

And if this be true, why should it not be said? Or why should it be said to the dead skull only, and not to the living face of him it touches? "Right well know I that fame is half dis-fame," so speaks the melancholy bard himself; why should we not soothe him by a word in season? Does not he do as much, and more, by us? If he feels that he "walks with his head in a cloud of poisonous flies," shall we not seek to disperse the insects? Shall we not seek, so far at least as a little willing shout may go, to drive off from him, if only for a moment, "the long-necked geese of the world that are ever hissing dispraise?"

That we should recognise no greatness but dead greatness! and that we can never see the real height of a man so long as he stands five feet so-and-so at our elbow! In the poet's own words, we "judge all nature from her feet of clay,

without the will to lift our eyes and see her godlike head, crowned with spiritual fire, and touching other worlds." When shall an uncalculating generosity return among us? When shall we embrace the beautiful, whencesoever it may come, and without let, without grudge, without reservation, call and cry and name it beautiful? Must only dulness have the benefit of praise? Must each new triumph of our fellow but freeze us into polite indifference that withholds its voice from him, or convert us into an obstructive wall that would balk his hearing, even of the plaudits from without? Was it only "at first starting," according to Charles Reade, "that Christians and artists loved each other?" This world is indeed mean; and in regard to many another besides Merlin, because "he seems master of all art, it fain would make him master of all vice."

This meanness Tennyson, as much as any man that breathes, has known and seen and suffered. But he is brave withal, and will not cast himself beneath it: "never yet," he cries, "was noble man but made ignoble talk; he makes no friend who never made a foe!" In his own work, indeed, he has had his own ample consolation, his own most rich reward. He that has filed so well

such vast variety of measures, from "Claribel" to "Guinevere" has had no dull time of it. He who wooed and won "The Miller's Daughter;" who scorned "the Lady Clara Vere de Vere;" who thrid the awe-hushed palace to the couch of "Beauty;" who listened to "the Stylite," and who heard the deep voice of "Ulysses'" self; he that said of "Lady Clare," "Oh, and proudly stood she up;" he that saw "Godiva," "as he waited for the train at Coventry:" that dwelt for years, an embowered nightingale, within the wail of "In Memoriam;" that sang "The Princess;" and that chanted "Maud;" that looked into "the meek blue eyes of Enid," "the truest eyes that ever answered heaven;" he that has been privileged to gather and to grow in stature and in shape before "the clear face of the blameless King,"—enough!—let "the common cry of curs" deafen all the air—of living men, here surely is the crownèd happiest! He surely, if any man, may dwell in a serene unreachable of all "whose low desire not to feel lowest, makes them level all, and pare the mountain to the plain, to leave an equal baseness."

We have said that Tennyson, as ripest, must take precedence both of Keats and Shelley; but

we abase neither of these without a grudge. We know what they are without him, but not what he would have been without them. Both died so young too; Shelley at thirty, Keats at twenty-four. Had Tennyson's mortal sojourn been as short, is it probable that he would have inherited an equal fame? With him luckily, however—luckily for us—all has gone differently. They, though young, had done their work not badly, and they died; while he, who needed, and who needing, got, the southern slope-lands and the evening-red, has grown and ripened to the yellow and the heavy ear.

Yes, doubtless; Tennyson owes no light debt to Keats and Shelley; nor indeed, are his obligations lighter to others of his predecessors. Not alone the splendour and the purity of Shelley, or the mellow notes of Keats, but Wordsworth's severe simplicity, Milton's divine abundance, Spenser's rich tenderness, these also, absorbed and assimilated, turn up like colours in the lustrous verse of Tennyson. Let us not be unjust to this last, however, because of his place in time. Who is it that has not had predecessors? Successive sequence holds of the very quality of the finite; and it is not right that we should im-

pute it singly to any man. Homer himself, first lark that ever sang, would have raised an infinitely thinner note, had not echoes from still earlier "makers" combiningly enriched it. We have only to look back upon our earliest ballads, charming as they are, to become aware of how much the metal of poesy gains in firmness, density, weight, and shape, under the successive hammers of a thousand workmen. And it is in the light of these thoughts that Tennyson must be looked at; for the reproach of imitation is not by any means legitimately his. From first to last, from "Claribel" to "Guinevere," in "Locksley Hall," "Godiva," "Lady Clare;" in the Ode to the Duke of Wellington, in "Ulysses," in "The Stylite," in "Maud," "The Princess," "In Memoriam," the "Idylls," it is neither Spenser nor Milton, neither Wordsworth nor Shelley nor Keats; it is Tennyson himself we see, "Not Lancelot, nor another."

Still it is probable that the mastery of the craft has proved much more laborious to Tennyson than to either of his co-mates. It is not certain, indeed, that he has yet attained to those consecutive and uninterrupted numbers, to that growing, flowing, and accumulating verse for which

both Keats and Shelley—and in the greater degree the latter—are so remarkable. We refer not here to the narrative, which in Tennyson runs on ever with infinite grace of consecution, but to the metres and their peculiar sequence. Read "Hyperion," "Alastor," "Comus;" one feels a certain swell, a certain continuous rising in the mere verse; the numbers are welded, they grow, flow, and accumulate. But one can hardly say as much, and in the same sense, for "The Princess." We get sight in this poem of a certain chequeredness rather; the oneness, the fusion of an improvised, extempore gush is rare in it; the hand of conscious elaboration seems to linger about it; one finds turns in it, the artificial quaintness of which rings with rhetoric. There is often a peculiar *insertedness*, indicative as it were, of the very process by which those "jewels, five words-long, that on the stretch'd forefinger of all time, sparkle for ever," were actually inlaid. There seems a certain impededness in the movement, a mincingness, a pretty mincingness, as if the feet were fettered—perhaps, like a sultana's, by ornament—to a certain reach. In short, to borrow words from the metaphysical category of Quantity, the orbit of Tennyson is a *discretum* rather than a

continuum; the circle may, on the whole, be full, but it has been described, as it were, in a series of interrupted dots, and not in a single, fluent, unintermitted sweep. The regularity of the dots is hardly constant either: they are not always true to the curve, but look oblique; nor are they, in equal spaces, always equally numerous. If Keats, if Shelley, and, better still, if Milton, "with his garland and his singing robes about him," rise into the empyrean, sustained on one long gust of melody, Tennyson may be said to attain like regions as by a ladder of Jacob, the rounds of which are of celestial workmanship, but not the less rounds. The peculiarity alluded to is seen at its fullest, perhaps, in "The Princess," where, indeed, the express prettiness proper to an arabesque has raised it into accentuated prominence. Its source is undoubtedly the fastidious labour of the bard: our enjoyment of the poem is undisturbed, however, and any sense of labour that may linger in our ear disappears in the flow of the narrative. Thorough study, in truth, might educe important results here; for Tennyson's very latest blank verse, though quite unobstructed whether by prettiness or the insertion of some too irresistible epithet, displays a similar peculiarity; and it is

worth inquiry how far is it a conscious, how far is it an unconscious product? Perhaps, indeed, the *discretum* may have this advantage over the *continuum*, that it does not so soon cloy; for where are there poems in any literature that can be read with a less flagging interest than these "Mauds," "Princesses," and "Idylls"?

We leave here this inquiry, however, and return to our main interest.

The Idyll, or Idyl—for both spellings occur in these very poems, the one attaching itself to the Greek εἰδύλλιον and the latter to the Latin *Idylium* (sometimes Idyllium, however,)—is, on the whole, Tennyson's favourite form of rhythmical composition. In this predilection he is not alone however: the Idyll is the favourite form of Keats also, to whom Tennyson directly affiliates himself; and not only of Keats, but of the national poetry in general. Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, Cowper, Wordsworth—to name but these—are all eminently idyllic. The Idyll, indeed, is our national ideal. A discriminative French writer remarks of our English scenery, "Rien de plus attendrissant que les paysages Anglais." Perhaps, then, it is these landscapes that *touch* us; for it is certain that we are not more remarkable for our factitious

conventionalism than for our yearning towards the unsophisticated. We toil and moil through life in a thousand unsightly avenues—trade, commerce, profession, office, position—but at the end of each there smiles for us an Idyll: home, the country, trees, fields, and running waters, a purer life with simpler manners and a ruddier health. The national poetry takes the national stamp; and in this respect, the compositions of Tennyson exhibit a deeper impression, perhaps, than those of any other of our poets. The best of his miscellaneous poems are inscribed, "English Idyls;" and now his latest and most finished work he names, "Idylls of the King." With such authority before us, we may venture to extend the word to "Maud" and "The Princess" also; and in that case, Tennyson's poems will be seen to be all—or all but all—Idylls.

According to some critics, however, the word relates to the common, and is misapplied to kings and princesses. We do not see the validity of the objection: it is not certain that poetry relates to the common in the ordinary sense at all, and it is quite certain that the essence of the Idyll is, that it should be a little picture-poem with nature in the background, and in the foreground men

and women of primitive and simple nobleness. In the sense of this definition, it will be evident to every reader that the term is admirably appropriate to the poems before us; and an examination of these poems themselves will abundantly demonstrate the legitimacy of their claim to an equality of place beside the very highest of the class.

These poems range over a period of some thirty years, and present, as might be expected, a series of gradations from the crudity of poetic youth to the full maturity of poetic manhood. The poet, one would think, however, must have largely burned his *juvenilia*, or, at all events, have subsequently re-worked and reformed them with unusual diligence and success, for there are but few poems in his collections that can be considered representative of the earliest stages of the art. Even "Claribel," we fancy, has been left to show the point of departure only—just as we see in cuttings, detached round mounds left standing, useless surely unless to indicate the original surface. The progressive rise from such mere callow sparrow-cheep as "mavis dwelleth," "wave outwelleth," "throstle lispeth," "runnel crispeth," "grot replieth," etc., to that most grand and in-

spired strain that closes "The Princess," or to that other, grander, perhaps, and more inspired, that is the climax of "Guinevere"—this progressive rise, as conceived between such extremes, is even infinite. "Claribel" is almost alone, however, and there is scarcely another poem among them all on so low a level.

Be the cause where it may, fire or correction, the crudities natural to young poets have, as regards these poems, been pretty well effaced, and the general negative of Tennyson must be named a small one. It is, in short, the negative of youth in general; which consists, as we all know, in a preponderance of form over matter, and in a consequent exaggeration and distortion of the form. To make up for substantial deficiency, there is an unsparing use of the mere organ. With will enough and effort enough, there is a vastly disproportionate result; for it is futile to rattle the loom if the shuttle be empty and the warp unbeamed. There is a constant straining at originality in image, verse, and measure, that terminates in affectation only. We have reminiscences of the library rather than reflexes of fact. The imagery seems external: it is traditional and not original. Blooms, shoots, winds, dews, roses, lilies, gold, and

silver, are re-distributed simply as they have been received, and with as little difficulty. Examples of this negative we think we see in several of the earliest poems, as in "Claribel," "The Owl," "The Sea-Fairies, "The Poet," "The Ode to Memory," "The Dying Swan," "The Goose," etc. In "A Character," the poet, perhaps, rather endeavours than succeeds to get words for what he sees—the cold dilettante, the mere amateur, namely; and we do not altogether except from a general imputation of the negative even such poems as "Mariana," "The Recollections of the Arabian Nights," and "The Lady of Shalott." These are doubtless meant to be very weird and wonderful, but they are mere breath, and, despite their verbal music, are as barren as the wind. The figures are invisible in their own vague splendour: the cup is too luscious; we are surfeited with sweets, and would fain pass it. Experience, in fact, is as yet not ripe enough to give either solid substance or precise shape to the mere dreams of the youth of genius, who accordingly wastes himself in the bare formality of his art.

But let us leave the faults and seek the excellences: let us abandon the cold emptiness of the negative for the warm fulness of the affirmative. Let us select for review—a review

that our limits will not permit to exceed a very fugitive glance—a few of the most noted of these Idylls.

Almost all of them are named from and group themselves around females. As a true poet, Tennyson is conscious of his own double nature; and his purer half, his sister, has ever an indefinable charm for him. Throughout all his poems, female characterization is the leading interest, and touches the daintiest, the subtlest, and the nicest everywhere abound.

What a charm of natural grace there is in "Lilian!" what a simple sweet archness! "Smiling, never speaking, looking through and through us, thoroughly to undo us," we see her bodily. The whole charming, natural little scene springs up freshly to our eyes. We feel actually present, we see it all, we enjoy quite as much as the actors themselves the sly and quiet preparation, and then the sudden accomplishment, of the seizure of the little lady. We positively feel the "crushing" of her. Then the physical music, and the adaptation of physical sound generally to sense and subject: in such qualities Tennyson is a finished master. There is a little poem of this kind which we recollect to have read ten years ago, and

which we miss from the edition before us. It is "The Skipping-rope," as regards internal thought valueless, but invaluable as a wreath of words that conveyed to the very eye a series of interchanging physical motions. We could have better spared "Claribel" than "The Skipping-rope."

This, which we have just indicated, is of course only one of the smaller adjuncts and adjuvants of poetry: such as it is, it is a true one however, and Tennyson, perhaps of all poets, knows best its use. Tennyson, in truth, is not only a born poet, but he is a complete artist. He is master of the trade, and at home with every tool of it. From assonance and alliteration up to the Pythian tone of rapture itself, no secret fails him. Foot and pause and rhyme and rhythm, are all his creatures, and docile to his will. He knows what rich virtue, what strange influence may flow from an old word, or a new word, or a word used for the occasion in its stricter and more directly derivative sense. He knows, too, how the mere position of words, single or in clusters, produces those sudden pulsings of physical melody—yea, of essential poetry—that come upon the tuned instrument within us, like the sudden perfume of some un-

noticed sweetbrier which arrests us with the charm of its unexpected deliciousness. An absolute power of expression dwells in these poems in its every form indeed, and "the fitting of aptest words to things" transacts itself unceasingly. Terms and phrases there are, the subtlest, the cunningest, the most penetrative and incisive, that touch the very quick of the truth—that reach to the inner inmost—that dragout the palpitating thought itself to the light, and no mere piecemeal husk of it. Tennyson, in short, possesses in its totality that inner melody by virtue of which is bardship his, and he knows every touch and turn that gives it egress, direction, modulation.

"Lilian" is followed by "Isabel"—a beautiful ideal of complete and placid wifehood. "Her eyes are not down-dropt, nor over-bright, but fed with the clear-pointed flame of chastity." "The laws of marriage are charactered in gold upon the blanchèd tablets of her heart." "Upon her lips there reigns the summer-calm of charity." "She has a prudence to withhold, a hate of gossip-parlance and of sway." These traits are perfect and unmistakable, and do indeed give us "a form of finished chastened purity." "Madeline" and

"Adeline" are, as characterizations, equally successful; and there is fine music in several other poems of the date 1830. "Love and Death" indeed is quite startling in its finish, and one is tempted to surmise that it must have slipt in from some later period.

The poems of the second division, 1832, improve greatly on those of the first, and are mostly flights indicative of a stronger pinion. "Oenone," though remarkable for classic depth and purity, has not received the attention she deserves. "Lady Clara Vere de Vere" is an exceedingly felicitous and effective little piece. The high-born flirt would, for mere pastime, make an insulting conquest of the poet; but to his lucid vision her inner worthlessness is all apparent, and to his simple dignity "the daughter of a hundred earls is one not to be desired." His pride, too, is as characteristic as the lady's own: "he knows she is proud to bear her name, but yet her pride is no match for his, for he is too proud to care from whence he came." The haughty coquette, he is quite determined, shall not "fix a vacant stare and slay him with her noble birth." He tells her pleasantly that "the grand old gardener and his wife laugh at the claims of long descent," "that to him a simple

maiden in her flower is worth a hundred coats of arms," and,

> "Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
> 'Tis only noble to be good:
> Kind hearts are more than coronets,
> And simple faith than Norman blood."

The sort of democratic aristocracy here is particularly fine: it is expressed without envy or any base heat; there is not a trace of vulgarity in it. Here are only the simplicity and the quietude of the fitting self-respect. We are reminded here of the gigantic phrase of Burns, "that he brings his patent of nobility direct from Almighty God;" and we are pleased that Tennyson, cherishing a like conviction, should express it with so much tranquillity of unpretending assurance. Such things please all—ploughman and parvenu, subject and sovereign—for they touch the eternal dignity of man as man—a height higher yet than that of king or kaiser.

Among the poems of 1832 we have the tale of the sweet, true wife that Alice, "the Miller's daughter," made. This is a genuine Idyll, and overpoweringly touching. We know no more perfect poem of a like size in the language. As a tale of love, it breathes at once a tenderness and

a truth of passion that can be paralleled nowhere out of any other author. It is a rounded little whole, and there is the charm in it of a picturesque reality that seems stolen from the very person of Nature herself. It exhibits in music, word, thought, and story, a perfection so chaste and pure that it is conceivable only to him who has read it. Fain would we quote—fain hang a long, long time yet over this perfect mirror of sweet love and true poesy—but our limits forbid.

In the same division, "The Lotus-eaters" is also an exceedingly successful little poem. The dreamy haze of the dreamy, enchanted land is transferred to the verse, and the numbers lift their feet as lusciously slothful as the hours themselves in that overpowering climate. What pictures spread themselves in single lines:

> "They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
> *Between the sun and moon* upon the shore;"

or,

> "To dream and dream like yonder amber light,
> Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height!"

Besides the mere charms of verse, there is throughout the poem a fine spirit of human reflection. The whole scepticism of the day (how perfectly Tennyson can endue what state of mind

he pleases!) comes to richest speech here: no stanza but is a symbol of satiety; no word but breathes itself out languidly as if utterly used up; and every line is glutted weariness.

As the poems of 1832 rise on those of 1830, so do those of 1842 rise upon their predecessors. Still the best of each division must be understood as coming together in the end to constitute a sort of upper house of peers. The tendency to the Idyll comes here more plainly to the surface: as we have already remarked, indeed, this division is even named "English Idyls." It is now that a most careful study of Wordsworth makes itself prominent. "The Excursion," and pastorals like "Michael," and "The Brothers," must have now attracted to themselves the nights and days of the young Tennyson. Such poems as "Audley Court," "Dora," "Walking to the Mail," "Edwin Morris," "The Gardener's Daughter," etc., are manifestly mere pleasant exercises of the poet in his art. The best of them, such as the last mentioned, are graceful pictures of flowers, fruits, and trees, alive with beauty and eloquent with love—love the richest, chastest, purest. Everywhere there are charming conceits and the daintiest turns. Still we cannot fail to see a certain

straining, a certain stiffness, a certain elaborateness as of an essay or an exercise; and some time after we have read them, they present themselves to our memory as but selected college copy-books, creditable in their series.

It is otherwise, however, with "The Morte d'Arthur," "St. Simeon Stylites," "Ulysses," "Godiva," "The Two Voices," "Locksley Hall," "The Day-dream," "Lady Clare," etc., all of which are to be ranked among the most perfect poems we possess. In "Love and Duty," "The Golden Year," "The Vision of Sin," "Amphion," "The Talking Oak," etc., there are quotable gems of rarest lustre, fascinatingly rich with love, phantasy, and wisdom—ripe poesy, indeed, full-tongued if curious-tongued.

Let us remind the reader of "The Day-dream," of "The Prologue," "The Sleeping Palace," "The Sleeping Beauty," "The Arrival," "The Revival," "The Departure," "The Moral," "L'Envoi," "The Epilogue." The poet himself tells us that "soft lustre bathes the range of urns;" but are not these a range of urns—golden all—upon a palace-marble—bathed in lustre surely from the spheres? What simple felicity of speech is this! What triumphant utterance to the most delicate fancies, the richest

imaginations! What delicious music! What most voluptuous sound! It is indeed a fairy palace—urns, lawns, parrot, peacock, page, butler, steward, king—fairy, tranced, but alive and human—alive and human, though under the crystal settings and amid the rainbow deckings of the very warmest and subtlest of poets!

Then Lady Clare! "Oh, and proudly stood she up!"—is it not the ballad of ballads? What privilege to be able to read such tendernesses, such noblenesses, to those we love, and to see their cheeks flush and their eyelashes glitter as we know our own do! Then "Locksley Hall!" How beautiful this love! How passion has grown and strengthened with the poet, and he has clomb to his majority! How all external helps and aids drop from him, and he stands forward on his own strength! The botany and ornithology of books have ceased, and those of nature have begun. He lives in his own heart now—in his own soul, and, living there, he must see with his own eyes, hear with his own ears, and speak with his own lips. Every line becomes a quotation: not one but might be a saw deep-sculpt upon a temple's front. All here is high, noble-hearted, generous, and unselfish; the love, the wisdom of the dove

that scorns, that pities the serpent of the world. Let him who would regain the uncorrupted freshness, the unsoiled purity of his prime, read "Locksley Hall!"

"The Two Voices" is also a noble poem, and we see in it one of the purest spirits of the age, wrestling with those grand and awful speculations that all time presses on us, but never any time more than the present. In this poem, and in "Locksley Hall," indeed (in "The Lotus-eaters," the element in question was more an affair of reproductive art), are the first murmurs of those sad questionings, which attain their full completeness of articulation in "In Memoriam." The poet is as yet young, however; his muscles are elastic, and his heart is fresh; nature is still glad and glorious around him; and the veil before humanity, —if it has fallen ragged here and there, revealing poverty and sin,—is yet thick enough elsewhere to conceal to hope a possible most joyous opulence. It is to be said too, that his pure, true, humble heart naturally reverts always to the only refuge that has efficacy to extend the healing of assurance. On the whole, we cannot help gathering from these poems a most pleasing picture of the young Tennyson, "nursing his youth sublime

with the fairy tales of science and the long results of time." We see him, like a knight, noble, chivalrous, and high, speaking ever a language so different from the slang of those unfortunate "fast" men, that almost everywhere else now-a-days obtrudes like sin; he, surely, is blameless of the wine-stains and the smut of clubs; nor has the flare of city midnights withered or made haggard him But to resume——

What a very gem of art "Godiva" is! So pure it is—so chastely limned—upon a tablet white as snow! No word but is the right one. No cut that is not sharp and true. How has he attained to this most perfect utterance? How is it that at the end, it is only a wet eyelash or some half-articulated exclamation that can speak the enchanted lustre and the absorbing joy with which we have been filled and flooded? Why quote, O reader? Go, read it for yourself! Read, and find yourself, the dingy garments of the day all dropped from you, endued in a robe white as charity and soft as goodness. Such charm flows from the pure flush of this most true imagination.

"St. Simeon Stylites" has always been a special favourite with us. There is in it an originality of conception as well as a completeness of execu-

tion, that has always captivated us. To paint a sheep or a tree, the painter, we are told, becomes a sheep or a tree: with a like object, and in a like manner, Tennyson has made himself "The Stylite." He has transformed himself into the lonely living statue on the narrow pillar in the Syrian waste. He has lived that outward life of heat and cold, of wet and dry, till now, stiff with aches and bowed with age, he is only half alive. Not less truly has he lived the inward life of this strange saint: he has converted his own consciousness into a dusky, hot, blind sense of sins, which he hardly understands, which he hardly believes in, but which prompt the most passionate cries. A dusky imagination he gives himself, firing up to thoughts of beatitude and the crowns of martyrdom. Feelings, too, of self-righteousness he acquires from the merits of his sufferings; and a dusky, but most real vanity must mix itself with all, for below stand the people worshipping him, and proclaiming the miracles he has wrought upon them. The whole consciousness of the poet has become for the nonce a dusky, hot, blind, righteous, self-righteous vanity. There is really here a very rare faculty of analytic conception; and it is in union with a power of expression as sure as rare.

"The Ulysses" is a strain even higher than "The Stylite," and quite as singular and original. What a noble vision is not that of the old hero, who will not "rust unburnished," but will "shine in use," who will leave his kingdom to his mild Telemachus, and like a Viking in his burning bark, will die, sailing beyond the sunset and the paths of all the western stars! How grandly he recounts that which he did and is! His voice comes from the mighty prime, and enables us to understand what might have been "that large utterance of the earlier" demi-gods. The poem is a finished picture, original and true, and pure in simple power

Beautiful as Tennyson's miscellaneous poems are, one feels discontented, nevertheless, that they should be so short, so fragmentary, so disconnected. Should not this grand power, one is apt to think, have been nursed, and cherished, and fed in secret, till it had been equal to a very Atlas-orb of song? Thinking thus, however, we turn questioningly to the larger poems.

On "Maud," we can linger as momentarily only as on her beautiful sisters that have preceded her. This poem, it appears, has hardly succeeded in propitiating official criticasters. It

is one, however, that will stand uninjured mightier blasts than such weak breaths as theirs. It is a most complete, consistent little work, perfect in its rounding, perfect in its keeping, perfect in its details. Maud, "with her clear-cut face, faultily faultless," changing for us as she changes for her lover, grows upon us, and fills up into a woman charming and complete, whom we love with our whole love. The brother, "that oil'd and curled Assyrian bull," is perfect in his place and perfect in his function. The incidents of the little drama open on us in an extremely felicitous manner, and the character of the moody solitary (with his ways of genius in a sulky temperament) that loves Maud, develops itself admirably. The poem abounds, moreover, in ripe reflection, in mature human wisdom, on the level of the day. The love in it is true and passionate, and gives birth to some of the most exulting and triumphant erotic strains that can be found in any literature. The poet ascends here and there into a fervour of passion unusual to him; and, as regards intensity, "Maud" is perhaps the intensest poem that Tennyson has ever written. There is indeed in it quite an oriental warmth of feeling and quite an oriental exuberance of music and imagery, and

we hesitate not to pronounce it the finest love-chant—most truly is it a chant—in the whole compass of English literature.

"The Brook" is a pleasant little triumph of art thrown off with the ease of the assured master. Kate Willows is but a glimpse into a picture, but it is a very delightful one. The ode to the Duke of Wellington, with its melody, its pathos, its grandeur, its majesty, and its incisive appreciativeness of character, we only mention.[1]

"The Princess" is one of the noblest poems we have ever read; it overflows with all the opulence of the guild; it possesses the deepest pathos, and again a sense of greatness, that lifts us to the heroic. The play of fancy is exhaustless, and the skill of the workman unexcelled. How from the prologue, with its wilful little Lilia, its demure maiden aunt, its high-spirited students, the travestied statue of Sir Ralph, the

[1] We may also mention now the beautiful poems of "Enoch Arden," and of "Aylmer's Field," which have at least *extended* the fame of their author. In the same volume "The Grandmother," and the "Northern Farmer," are for our poet fresh victories, admirably executed portraits of genuine human analysis both. The "Alcaics" and the bit of the Iliad contrast Tennyson unfavourably, as was to be expected, with Milton and Homer; while, as was also to be expected, the imitation of Catullus is most deliciously and delightfully successful.

bluff Sir Walter, the lady-knight that fought her foes, the institute, and "the nineteenth century on the grass,"—how from all these, as from so many reels and bobbins, the *magic* threads wind off and spin themselves into this dream-like medley. The cracked old Gama himself hangs on by the prologue, and has his particular thread somewhere—*that* we feel sure of—though we cannot exactly say where. But this poem has a purpose, and an important one; and more light has been thrown by it on the question of the relative position of the sexes than by all the express articles ever written on the subject in book or newspaper. In this the poet has done good service to his own immediate days. So nobly, too, as the result is expressed! Than the Prince's address to the subdued and softened Ida, what subtler strain of inspiration can we well find in any other bard?

"The Idylls of the King,"—in view of their length, of the unity that imparts symmetry and coherence to them, and of the calm, ripe power in which, as in an atmosphere, they live—are certainly the most important of all the Idylls. The introduction to "The Morte d'Arthur," in which we learn "he burnt his Epic, his King

Arthur, some twelve books," leaves us at no loss to know that we are here in presence of the poet's earliest love. Keats, sick of the meanness and mercenariness of modern life, fled to an ideal Greece; and Tennyson, sick too, took refuge in the fairy land of Arthur and the Table Round. To such a gentle soul as that of the young and as yet unknown Tennyson, we may readily conceive the dominant manners of his own days as all unsuited. From the vulgar indifference of the mere wealthy, as from the equally offensive indifference of the mere well-born, what could he, with his credulity (as poet) of Godhead everywhere, and his soul athirst for sympathy,—what could he but turn, chilled, repelled, indignant? What dear delight to such a soul to flee from the jarring world of the present, and breathe its own natural air amid the nobleness and the knightliness that floated palpably from the grand personages of that land of Faery! Then, like a true poet, he would not breathe this fine air selfishly, but he would open it to his fellows; and so he mused and mused, and dreamed and dreamed, and for us, too, spread those lustrous lawns, and rainbow woods, and golden palaces, filling them with shapes the stateliest and the best of generous

poesy. What a healing lies in these grand phantasies for the sick time that glares around us! What shapes of men and women, to shame us out of our vulgarity, impurity, and corruption!

In female characterization, we have already had occasion to remark the power of Tennyson; but all previous triumphs in this kind are outdone by the present. The women of the "Idylls" are emphatically representative women. Elaine, though perhaps clearer, harder, and, so to speak, more simply single, may be looked on as but a younger sister of Enid; but Enid, Vivien, and Guinevere are sharply defined, and each is typical of a class.

Vivien were a truer *Dame aux Camelias* than that hectic nullity of French sentimentalism that originates the name. She is the true light woman, with all her wiles, and with all her selfish shallowness. Rebuffed, detected, stale, "she hears in thought the lavish comments when her name is named, and hates the knights." No resource is left her but the aged Merlin, with his shaggy eyebrows and his shaggy beard. Him, then, she follows with her arts relentlessly, and all the more relentlessly that she knows him to possess a spell which, once hers, would restore to her

will the power that had forsaken her charms. Of course, she succeeds, and she leaves the out-witted sage, shrieking out over him the just reproach of "fool." The poet has here ample canvas for his woman's lore, but the subject is unpleasant. The wise old Merlin, in such undignified positions, causes but pain; and the image will not mitigate the fact that

> "The pale blood of the wizard, at her touch,
> Took gayer colours, like an opal warmed."

What a contrast to the evil, hard, and shameless Vivien is the guileless, sweet, shamefaced Enid, the very type and model of a faithful, tender, and a loving spouse! Her husband, the good, honest, frank, lusty Geraint, sullen from misapprehension, puts her to a variety of trials, which the sweet soul bears with such unchangingness of obedience, that the reader is completely won to her. Some of the scenes are exquisitely beautiful, finely conceived, and skilfully executed.

Guinevere is a character of a very different stamp from that of Enid. She is a queen, every inch of her, if a sinful one: she is also a woman, every thought and feeling of her, if, too, a sinful one. She is not the meek, and sweet, and gentle Enid, but still less is she the shallow, loose, and

flaunting Vivien. She loved Lancelot, mistaking him, unfortunately, for Arthur, her affianced lord, before she had seen the latter; and high, generous, and stately, she yet possesses not moral power enough to clasp her feelings to her duty. Yet, in her heart of hearts, there lurks the better woman; and, in the end, her penitence and recognition of the worth of him she has injured are most noble and queenlike.

The male characters in these fine tales are as successful as the female. So statelily they move in the simple knightliness that is their element! "They step with all grace, and not with half disdain hid under grace, as in a smaller time, but kindly men moving with kindly men." What smaller time the poet means, the reader sees. Yes; politeness now-a-days is seldom more than "half disdain hid under grace." Generally, indeed, it is something infinitely worse than this: it is the affectation of a certain easy audacity, in which there is no ease nevertheless, but always the uneasy self-interrogation, "Have I hit it, think you?" Whatever it be, and whencesoever it be, we all know it. Tennyson has here accurately indicated it: he, indeed, knows it well—we remember he was "gorgonized by the stony

British stare of an oil'd and curled Assyrian bull"—and hates it. Whatever is genuine in the island hates it, and most fervently prays to be delivered from it. It is the mildew that sits withering up all our social existence now. It lay at the heart of the Indian mutiny perhaps, and it has certainly "gorgonized" the better part of Europe into hatred of us. How different were the manners of these men, these *gentle*men! "*They* did not deal in scorn, but if a man were halt or hunched, scorn was allowed in him as part of his defect, and he was answered softly by the King and all his Table,— or from exceeding manfulness and pure nobility of temperament, they refrained from even a word."

These fine manners find in Lancelot their sort of living impersonation. He moves, and breathes, and speaks, and acts full man, full gentleman, the knightliest of all the court, the star of chivalry. But our grand poet, loving all that is pure and chaste in life, will not allow Lancelot to pass by as something perfect, as something to be revered only. He will not let us see him without the cloud upon his brow, fallen from his sin with Guinevere, and against the king. Noble, grand, he stands up still, but a chequered image, "for the

great and guilty love he bare the queen, in battle with the love he bare his lord, had marred his face, and marked it ere his time." In grand consciousness of this, the grand man, though fallen, says himself: "In me there dwells no greatness, save it be some far-off touch of greatness, to know well I am not great: there (pointing to Arthur), there is the man!"

Yes, there is the man; for Lancelot and every other figure become eclipsed and lost in the lustre that surrounds the king. Not without reason, but rightly, are they named "The Idylls of the King;" for he is the ever-present unity of the whole, and all else is ancillary merely. To the eye of the bard, no purer, greater figure ever grew than this of Arthur. To the eye of the reader, also, most truly can it be said to grow: for it is only at the last, when we have reached the focus of the climax, that a thousand little traits that we had passed unheeded suddenly flash together, in our consciousness, into an image of such pure and perfect herohood, that our own small humanity must dilate to hold it. The art with which the individual beams, at first scattered here and there, and lost to sight, are, at length, and all at once, and suddenly, in one transcendent and astounding

focus, gathered, is, beyond expression, great. Into this focus even "The Morte d'Arthur" enters as a component ray of no weak lustre; and now it is only that we understand who he was "who fought all day in Lyonnesse;" him for whom Sir Bedivere "made broad his shoulders to receive his weight;" him who told us, "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." Queen Guinevere, and Lancelot, and all the court, were, after all, not of this man's height. To her and them "he was all fault who had no fault;" whom she could love, whom they could love "must have a touch of earth:" "it was the low sun made the colour." He was but "a moral child," "a passionate perfection," and "who can gaze upon the sun in heaven?" To them nobleness was tameness. To such interpreters, "his white blamelessness, from over-fineness not intelligible, was accounted blame." Yet the unconscious instinct of his greatness lies in them all, and radiates from them all.

See him, how he moves among them! Vivien has spoken words of invitation to him, "at which the king had gazed upon her blankly, and gone by." Enid, "gravely smiling, he lifts from horse, and kisses with all pureness, brother-like, and

shows an empty tent allotted her, and glancing for a moment till he sees her pass into it," turns then, etc. Oh, the mild face of this blameless king! we see it even when Geraint begs permission to leave the court, "and the king mused for a little on his plea, but, last, allowing it," etc. What noble trust he has in his dear friend, the great Sir Lancelot, and in his queen! When the courtiers pledge the two, Sir Lancelot and her, he, the king, listens, smiling; for pure and great himself, they, too, are pure and great, and the love between them must be pure and great and chivalrous, and it pleases him, as between such dear ones. When suspicion comes, it finds the soil so noble that it has pains to grow: "and the king glanced first at him, then her, and went his way." How he felt, and what he did, when the truth came, make manifest the man. The queen says, "He never spake a word of reproach to me; he never had a glimpse of mine untruth." How could he—he who "honoured his own word as if it were his God's," and was so white himself that his whiteness shone upon and hid the blacknesses of those around him?

Let us see him in the fight, "this moral child;" let us see "the king charge at the head of all his

Table Round, and break" the foe! Let us see him,

> "High on a heap of slain, from spur to plume,
> Red as the rising sun with heathen blood!"

And seeing him thus, let us remember how mild he is at home, how "if his own knight casts him down, he laughs, saying his knights are better men than he." Yet Lancelot "never saw his like" in war: "there lives no greater leader."

Then see him with Lancelot, even after suspicion has been whispered to him: he flings one arm about his neck "with full affection," and says,

> "Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in whom I have
> Most love and most affiance, for I know
> What thou hast been in battle by my side."

These are some of the traits that we pass, and hardly see, but which flash up suddenly into our recollection, when we hear his last words to the queen, and get the last glimpse of his face, "which then was as an angel's." For these constitute the climax, and there is the focus of which we have spoken. These the last words of the king over the queen, "grovelling at his feet, with her face against the floor," issuing, as it were, from the great wound in his mighty heart, rise

up like the yearning music of a pure god in sor row. Hollow, monotonous, terrible with wrong, awful with prophecy, deep with the depth of doom, the voice of the blameless king, now superhuman, strikes, clang on clang, appalling the sinner at his feet, appalling us. All the sad story: the treachery, the sin, the grief, the ruin of the noblest plans, the sense of greatness unappreciated, the wrong to friendship and to faith, "the pang that made his tears burn, while he weighed their hearts with one too wholly true to dream untruth in them;" the grand tenderness—tenderness as of a woman, a man, a saint—in him "whose vast pity almost made him die;" the grand forgiveness, the mighty love unchanged, unchangeable; the hope that, "leaning on our fair father, Christ," and purified, she yet may claim him "in that world where all are pure,"—all comes upon the reader, who feels himself transformed, intensified, as by communication with the hearts of angels—all comes upon him—and his heart is swollen and his eyes burn—all comes upon him with a sense of grandeur, with a weight and conflict of emotion, with a sublimity of sorrow, such as he shall have for the first time then experienced from the power of poet. "O

true and tender! O selfless man, and stainless gentleman!" well might the queen exclaim: "Ah, great and gentle lord, who wast, as is the conscience of a saint among his warring senses, to thy knights—now I see thee what thou art; thou art the highest and most human too; not Lancelot, nor another!" Yes, the highest and most human too; not Lancelot, nor another! A king indeed, a man, a gentleman, a royal man, a royal gentleman—"the king!" Can we see him, and not grow better? Can we think upon that clear face, without acknowledgment that we possess, through Tennyson, the light of another moral sun within us, which sun has been gathered by the poet from the infinite white light of Christ, and fixed, to guide us, within the large ideal of a Christian king?

Ideal certainly, and superhuman, are these shapes but not *in*human; no good feature there but may be ours. As for Enid, we should pity that man who has not seen and known and loved her somewhere—somewhere as mother, sister, daughter, wife, rare as she certainly becomes: for Enid, once the ideal of an Englishwoman, now too "slow" for these "fast" times, and ill at ease beneath the bold eyes of the new audacity, can

find but little favour anywhere now-a-days, and is hardly even seen by our oil'd Assyrian arbiters.

We do not agree, then, with the objection that the personages in these poems are "unreal, and belong to fairy land;" on the contrary, we believe them valuable wholly and solely for the humanity that is in them. That that humanity should be demonstrated alien to the actual world, and not in us, would nowise move us; for that humanity, if not now in us, was once in us, and should still be in us. If we are so wedded to colour that these transparent lovelinesses are invisible to us, the blame is ours, the loss is ours. The objection, in short, is baseless, and, if admitted, would wither up, not these alone, but all the other great shapes shadowless of sacred poesy.

In these Idylls we have the very purest growths of genius; and they are presented to us with all the charms of the most finished art. No effort now; no straining for originality; the light touch of the master everywhere! The story flows on with entrancing simplicity; and we are ever and anon surprised into tears, touched to the quick by the mere beauty of it. The simplicity, too, is not bald, not austere, but soft, and delicate, and lustrous. "To doubt the fairness of these poems

were to want an eye; to doubt their pureness were to want a heart."

There remains for us but one work of Tennyson's, the "In Memoriam," to notice now. The others, as Idylls, seemed to form a unity, and came naturally together; this one, however, stands apart in a solitude all its own. There is a love here greater than the love of women; a grief deep as the grief of mothers in bereavement. Early associations—and, in confirmation, consult Longfellow's "Golden Milestone"—constitute the tree that clasps closest to the heart of the poet, growing into it with root and branch and tendril: tear this tree up, and oh, the sacred blood that rains upon the ground! We feel indeed as if this were one of those things so inexpressibly holy that they are for silence and the heart only: the noises of the world sound loud and sacrilegious here. We stand upon the threshold of the sacred cell that held his tears, that holds the voice of his distress for ever, and dare hardly venture in. The minstrel bowed upon his lyre—this lyre's fitful note—awe and appal us. Here, if ever, however, is a human heart nakedly given us, and we may not reject the lesson.

The particular grief we shall pass in silence;

guessing only "from its measure" the greatness as well of mourned as mourner. For us, it shall not be the heart of the poet, but the broken heart of the century that wails here in an absolute music. For indeed it is not a particular, but a universal grief that constitutes the burthen of these melodious tears. The soul of the poet, solemnized by the great shadow that has fallen into it, rises into sublimity, and wrestles, Job-like, with the unanswerable Why? Deep doubt has seized him; for these are days of doubt, and scepticism is sovereign of the hour. How beneath the weight of all these doubts, this good soul struggles, lifting to the cope of heaven eyes so pitiful, prayers so fervently earnest! He would indeed be the child of God: but the air is dark, and he knows not where to turn. His soul heaves yearningly Godward: but ever and anon the knowledge of the day falls, like a cold dawn, with a shiver on him; and faith faints helplessly into the arms of despair. That there is "no hope of fame for modern rhyme," "that fame itself expires in endless age;" these are small matters. But now to him "time has become a maniac scattering dust," "life a fury slinging flame," "and men but flies, that sting, lay eggs, and die;"

and hope there seems none, but, as a particle of matter, "to be blown about the desert dust," or "sealed within the iron hills." The poems expressing these dismal mental experiences are, we hesitate not to say, absolutely unexcelled, whether in ancient or in modern verse. We refer more particularly to Nos 53, 54, 55, and others in the immediate neighbourhood of these. It is in one of these that the reader will find what we have been accustomed to consider—when taken in connexion with the general context—the grandest poetical image that has ever been produced, those "great world's altar-stairs that slope through darkness up to God." Throughout the whole of these magnificent psalms, we have expressions furnished us, the most trenchant and incisive, for all the subtlest turns of educated reflection: no point of cultured speculation but has here its word. One glories in this triumph of expression: one feels glad that every phantom has received its name at last, and that we have thus power, at will, to summon them into day. Still, again, one feels sad; one feels unsatisfied: can the poet *name* the phantoms only, can he not *lay* them also? Right is it to put the problem: to put the problem, and to put it truly, is the duty of every

true man. Far happier were those days, certainly when the problem was *not* put, and when every man lived and moved and had his being in an all-unconscious answer, but our days have been otherwise appointed; we, it seems, must put the problem. But, after all, are we but putting it? The happiness of the unconscious answer is certainly denied us evermore; but have we really not yet attained to the greater happiness, the clearer happiness of a conscious answer? Do not we touch here a question much more important than the mere putting of the problem? As for that, indeed, has not the problem been put and put again; and, as regards mere putting, has it not, at length, reached its ultimate perfection? To what end repeat and re-repeat, and why for ever in these days the sound of doubt, disgust, complaint, hopelessness, weariness, despair? The path of literature after forty, is it only from gloom to gloom? Dickens used to cheer us with the freshness of the mere senses, the elasticity of the mere animal heart: but where is all his buoyancy now? Have we nothing left but flatness, insipidity, staleness? Thackeray, once on a time, could make us hate the meanness of pretension; but has he become himself a portion of

that which, all his life, he has so exclusively and industriously watched and held up to ridicule? Is his pen but a weary snob, ineffably *blasée*, unutterably used up, that yawns in blank satiety even while it so glibly nibs over the paper? And Carlyle too—is there not a tone of inexpressible sadness in him? Then Tennyson, and the questionings of "In Memoriam!" Why is this? Is there nothing for the race but scepticism and the senses, or—scepticism and suicide? Surely we have advanced, at last, beyond the mere putting of the problem; surely the answering of it "must even now be of ripe progress!" Surely there is this answer, at all events, that Christianity, after French criticism, and German criticism, and accepting each for what it is worth, and for all it is worth, is a purer thing than ever, and that it will live for ever, and grow for ever! The cheerless atheism of Feuerbach, and the preposterous autotheism of Max Stirner (if in earnest), are, we know, externally the latest fruits of the latest philosophy: but they are only externally so; and neither ever really possessed any umbilical cord of junction. No: the true result of the latest philosophy—the true result of Kant and Hegel—is, that knowledge and belief coalesce in

lucid union, that to reason as to faith there is but one religion, one God, and one Redeemer.

The small section who affront the sun of Sunday with their petty pamphlets in their open shops—who occupy, so self-complacently, their flimsy world of an "Age of Reason,"—who pretend still to read by the paltry light of French enlightenment,—have been certainly left behind by that other party who—in the midst of a certain uneasy hesitation, that, Antæus-like, must seek renewal of strength from time to time in the earth of the senses—profess adhesion to the faith of Schelling in his Spinozistic epoch; but both have been far transcended by those whom philosophy has enabled consciously to return to the feet of a Mediator and Saviour.

This is the last great step; and it is right that poetry should know of it, that she may apply herself to the more congenial task of singing faith than of pointing doubt. Still the reader must not infer that Tennyson, rising, in the sad darkness of the bereaved hour, into the sublime atmosphere of Job, ever condescends to the shabby prose of infidelity. We have said already that his humble heart turns always to the one true refuge; nor indeed has any poet, not even excepting Cowper,

written with a purer piety than the bard of "In Memoriam." His "faith is large in Time, and that which shapes it to some perfect end." If he has "touched a jarring lyre at first," he strives to "make it true" in the end; and he attains finally the grand hope, with which his dead friend is mingled, to

> "Arrive at last the blessed goal,
> When He that died in Holy Land,
> Will reach us out the shining hand
> And take us as a single soul."

But the cloud does not sit upon him for ever; rising, it "lets the sun strike where it clung;" and Tennyson, issuing from his grief, has soared to truth and humanized his song. He has come to see that poetry is something infinitely higher than a mere refinement of cultivated leisure; he desires to make it operative towards a purpose; he seeks to lead it, like a purifying spirit, renovatingly, into the actual and the practical. Hence "The Princess," and "The King," and the reflective portions of "Maud." We shall not depreciate these great services to humanity; still we anticipate from Tennyson a turning to the practical completer yet. The "stitch, stitch, stitch" of "The Shirt," though in a certain sense

a very common sound, and heard in a worse than common room, is really much sublimer than the consciously-intervolved word-vapour of Wordsworth on his mountain-top. The "One more unfortunate" on Waterloo Bridge is really more poetical than "Guinevere;" and sorrows like these cry piteously for help to us from every corner. Oh the wrongs of children, for example, in the rank brick-work of fastidious London! Was ever world more cruelly confused and desperate? And shall not the poet aid to purify, to sweeten, and to cleanse? His true themes lie not, after all, in the shadowy legends of a buried past. He himself says, "Nature brings not back the mastodon, and why should any man remodel models?" The poet, with his stylus and his tablets, gliding between the forest and the sea, or winding round the cataract to the mountain, is not, after all, our highest figure; nor is his highest hest the polishing of carven cedar in refined and amiable solitude. It is the present that must minister to the present; vainly shall we expect an adequate and effectual healing from the recovered images of an ancient tomb.

We have already assigned to Tennyson the nearest place to Milton; still all such decisions

of relative rank are to a certain extent invidious, one-sided, and untrue. There is in Milton a density and intensity of metal, audible in the very breadth and depth of the mere ring of it, that securely place him above all later aspirants; but as we have hinted, we are not without compunctions in singling out Tennyson from all these for the next place. Dryden and Pope give rise to no uneasiness, for they are poets of another class. To Burns we can do justice apart, and on other grounds. With Cowper, Campbell, Southey, Moore, we can set ourselves right. Even Byron and Coleridge shall not excite a qualm, for they are mere Bedouins of verse—nomads—not settlers in the realms of song. Our difficulties relate, all of them, to Wordsworth, Keats, and Shelley.

When we think of the "Laodamia," for example, we are compelled to admit that there is in Tennyson nothing more perfect, whether in thought or execution, nothing higher, nothing purer, while, at the same time, if not grander, it is at least denser in tone than anything this poet has yet produced. Then Shelley, with his imagination as of the unclouded blue when nothing but the sun is there—his selfless heart—his

boundless sympathies—his pity and his gentleness—his images, which are as living sublimities that awe—the supernatural melodies of his verse—the unparalleled splendour and magnificence of his innumerable products - how shall we abate him under any man? Keats again, so fecund, facile, full, with his delicious sound, his instantaneous instinct of the very self of elemental beauty, his sumptuous fancy, his gracious imagination—Keats, blowing a pipe so mellow that it charms, whispering single words that are as "open sesames" to the most enchanting secrets—Keats perplexes us in turn. Where can we find grounds to justify our preference? As compared with either Shelley or Keats, we cannot claim for Tennyson any superiority of original endowment; he is probably inferior to the former in material grandeur, as to the latter in material richness. Perhaps his coinage is less red-new than theirs; perhaps his imagery does not always blend indissolubly into one essence with the thought like theirs, but stands side by side with it, illustratively, rhetorically. Perhaps there is in him more art, in them more nature. How found his higher seat, then?

As regards Wordsworth, on the other hand,

conceding, perhaps, superior richness of original nature to Tennyson, how shall we prefer his products before that "Laodamia" which we have already vaunted? Coleridge sums up Wordsworth's excellences under six heads, which are shortly these:—1. Pure, appropriate language; 2. Weight and sanity of original reflection; 3. Sinewy strength of lines and paragraphs; 4. Truth to nature; 5. Subtle thought in unison with sensibility, and sympathy with man as man; 6. Imaginative power. Now, every one of these six attributes can be predicated quite as truly of Tennyson as of Wordsworth, and, reflection apart, quite as truly, sometimes more truly, both of Keats and Shelley. Coleridge's characteristics are evidently too general then—they do not possess sufficient definiteness of specific limitation to enable us to apply them as criteria regulative and distributive of the distinctive merits of any poet: they are clues tied to a hundred boles; they are general, and not, as they profess themselves, special, critical tests.

Perhaps, on the whole, we may sum up the problem not too incorrectly thus:—

In regard to the question of relative superiority, Tennyson's difficulties with Wordsworth

concern not the man but the products; while with Keats and Shelley they respect less the products than the men.

We have always believed that Wordsworth did not bring with him so directly and absolutely from nature the rich-flushed ivory of the poet's soul as either of his three younger rivals. We fancy we detect all through Wordsworth an occasional insonority as of original wood. In fact, if we consider Wordsworth, in his general character as thinking man, we must admit that his intelligence was, in many directions and to a considerable extent, opaque and wooden. Such, we find from *The Representative Men*, he must have manifested himself to Emerson. The woody fibre present in the man, however, disappears from his products. His best sonnets, "The Vernal Ode," "Laodamia," etc., are wholly free from it: it has been roasted out and a perfect metallic ring obtained. It is the quality of this metallic ring, its density, that seems to attach to Wordsworth, relatively to Tennyson, greater weight, greater breadth, greater size, and to approximate him more naturally and justly to Milton. We feel, however, that much of this density is Milton's own; that it is the result of life-long study and

effort on the part of Wordsworth, who, in all probability, would never have come near it had not the metal of "Comus," the "Odes," and the "Sonnets" ever rung in his ear. Observe, too, how often Wordsworth's "points" are but affairs of words. Tennyson has been accused of affectation, but the censure is much more relevant to Wordsworth In the ripe works of the former there is no affectation unfilled by a solid core of substance, while in the best productions of the latter affectations abound, consisting of mere form, and all but wholly empty. Wordsworth has been called a metaphysical poet. Of metaphysics proper he knows nothing; and how often do we not find the passages specially so named mere convoluted vapours of laborious breath, involving only a fraudulent sublimity of tumid verbiage? Wordsworth's very position was adverse to the production of the humaner and more valuable results of the art. It is not in the nature of things that a man who sets himself to stare at mountains and at lakes only should, in the end, really enrich himself. In such exclusive companionship humanity will well from him, and he will become rigid as his own rocks, narrow and bald and indurated.

Wordsworth, then, probably inferior to Tenny-

son is primitive and original, becomes certainly inferior to him in ultimate and acquired manhood. Then again, as regards the products, if there seems a superior density of tone in some of them, this merit is weakened by reflection on its source. Here, then, we found the claim of Tennyson to superiority, on greater native manhood, and on the greater variety, richness, and more human interests of his successful products. It is really a great matter that we hear, in Tennyson, a voice from the whole range of culture.

In regard to Shelley and Keats, it is not the natural Tennyson that is greater than either: it is the ripe maturity of his thought, wrought into the fair products of his imagination, that has bestowed on these a weight and value, rare in any poet, and mostly wanting in the young effusions of Keats and Shelley. Thus, then, Tennyson is distinguished from Wordsworth, on the one hand, by superiority, as well of original richness as of acquired range; and, on the other hand, from Keats and Shelley by the ripe maturity and full humanity of his products.

There is one characteristic in which, though it is common to all great writers, Tennyson is unusually eminent—it is the faculty of conception, or of

inner perception, inner vision. He never writes until he has fairly pictured all; and while he writes, his eye never for a moment quits the picture, but passes on from point to point with luminous fidelity and unerring accuracy. The anecdote of Arthur treading on a crowned skeleton, from which the crown rolls into light, and, turning on its rim, flees, etc., will illustrate our meaning. Equally good illustrations may be found in the fall of Geraint, his battles, the scene with Enid in the hall of Doorm, the tournament in Elaine, and the final interview of the king with the queen. In this minute picture-work, Tennyson is always particularly vivid. It is no speciality of his, however, but belongs to all great writers. To tell the whole truth, it is the secret of literature in general: look at it but deep enough, and even the commonest old tub, red-hooped awry, will suggest words to render it interesting.

The main characteristics of Tennyson are yet to mention. they are ethical conception and classical execution; the latter being but the necessary concomitant and natural shadow of the former. The central sun of all Tennyson's writings is the heart: this is the reflection that lies in his deepest deeps. "In Memoriam" alone de-

monstrates Tennyson to possess the richest, purest, truest, natural heart, perhaps, of any poet on record; and with this natural heart is involved what we name the whole ethical side of him. We know no poet that has ever displayed an equal sense of moral goodness in its two forms of greatness in man and of purity in woman. To all forms of these he rises thrilling, dilating, brimming. He is the most Christian of poets. This is his leading attribute; and the classic execution is but its emanation, but its natural garment.

Milton is moral certainly; but he is fierce, intolerant, Hebraic; while Tennyson is gentle, sweet, and Christian. Wordsworth is also moral; but he is cold and thin, while Tennyson is warm and rich. There is a spirit of gentleness in Keats and Shelley, especially the latter, which is ethic certainly; but, in Keats, it is aimless and lost in mere sensuous beauty, while, in Shelley, it is a too eager longing only that rushes into error.

It is this ethical or human side of Tennyson that involved his necessity for maturity and experience. To Keats, who had no quest but sensuous beauty, boyhood sufficed. To Shelley again, who, too eager to wait, too impatient even for the laws of time, must, instantly and at once,

give voice and shape to all his crude sympathies and torrid anticipations, youth gave verge enough. But Tennyson, who bore the burthen of a purer, richer, larger humanity, required the breadths of Space for his roots and the heights of Time for his branches.

Such are the results of a comparison of Tennyson with several of our greatest Idyllists. We may say that Milton keeps the summit of the hill, and sits amid the thunders; that Wordsworth has chosen for himself a separate crag, where he lives in a somewhat thin complacency, but waited on by simple dignity and solemn earnestness; that Shelley takes the very breast of the mountain, fronting the firmament and the sun; that Keats has found a haunted wood upon the flank, where flash the white feet of the gods and goddesses; and that Tennyson, holding himself free to wander where he will, prefers the fields of labour and the flowers of culture hard by the smoke of roofs.[1]

[1] Many, it must be confessed, will certainly bear recollections within them, in the light of which Wordsworth will show beside Tennyson as the deep, true, pure, the holy, simple, severe spirit of Nature herself beside an artist that rejoices in the lustre of gems and jewels and golden prettinesses, in the gauds and knicknacks of mere art,—in "carven imageries of fruits and flowers, and diamond panes of quaint device." But will sincerity of analysis substantiate this? Will not the thought of a certain external effort,

In conclusion, let us but think again of all those gentle lovelinesses, and subtle delicacies, and manly greatnesses, that name themselves "Godiva," "Lady Clare," "Enid," "Ulysses;" "Arthur;" let us think of the passionate intensity of "Maud," of the exuberant phantasy of "The Princess," of the ripe culture, deep thought, and long, long wail of "In Memoriam;" let us think of the true eye for character in the Ode to the great Duke and elsewhere; let us not forget, either, the poet's kindly, genial, manly letter to his friend Maurice; let us recall all these, and the one tendency that directs them all,

> "To keep down the base in man,
> To teach high thought, and amiable words,
> And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
> And love of truth, and all that makes a man:"

and surely we must agree that, unless language be hypocrisy and literature a sham, this is not only the richest, purest, and truest of poets, but also—so far as publicity reaches--the richest, purest, and truest living man.

a certain thinness, a certain meagreness and prose, obtrude to take from the one, of a thousand realities, a thousand truest triumphs, to add to the other? It is a happiness in the end, be all that as it may, that we can afford to worship at both shrines. Browning, as requiring first of all a special analysis, has not been mentioned above; if less rich, or less richly-tuned, than one of the others, he is probably stronger than either.

LORD MACAULAY.

JUDGING from such notices as we have read, it would seem difficult for the critics of the day to speak of this eminent man in other terms than those of extreme admiration, or of not much less extreme dislike. The way in which the whole stock quiver of superlatives has, on this occasion, been precipitately emptied, and its contents indiscriminately applied, reminds us of a passage of Lord Macaulay's own. He remarks, in reference to a certain successful speech, that it was said of it, "that it was more ornamented than the speeches of Demosthenes, and less diffuse than those of Cicero." "This unmeaning phrase," he continues, "has been quoted a hundred times; that it should ever have been quoted except to be laughed at, is strange: the vogue which it has obtained may serve to show *in how slovenly a way most people are content to think*." A truer observation has very seldom been made; and we dare

say the recollection of our readers has not any very difficult or distant journey to travel back for the discovery of illustrations in professional criticisms on Lord Macaulay himself. Where there are no bounds neither is there any centre, and there reigns only a futile and impracticable vague. This we, for our part, would fain eschew. In short, a characterization that, with precision of limit, shall possess a coherent, reasoned interior of discernment and discrimination—this is our object; and, if we fail in its accomplishment, we can assure our readers that it will be against our own best efforts.

To those who look forward to the triumphs of literary or political life, the career of Macaulay is no less instructive than interesting. What elements of success were given him, and, still more, what elements of success he himself brought, deserve, on the part of all such aspirants, the very closest attention. If it be true, as regards the former of these considerations, that he seems, from the very first, to have been borne, as it were, on supporting hands, steadily onwards, from place to place, and from honour to honour, till ambition the very greediest would have called content—no less true is it that, but for the second con-

sideration, but for the elements of success which he himself brought, these places would never have been held, and these honours could never have been accorded. Had the youth displayed no talent, had he written no prize poems, had he not shone in the Union Debating Club, all the wealth of Zachary Macaulay his father, and all the influence of Wilberforce his friend, would have been powerless to aid—would have been powerless to extract from Lord Brougham one single word of that long letter of advice which, received in young Macaulay's twenty-third year, must have exercised a most valuable influence on his whole character and subsequent progress. But more, in addition to talent, and in addition to study, had not the youth possessed a rare sobriety of judgment, a rare perseverance of effort, and a rare concentration of purpose, all the other elements would have still been futile. It is to the union of these elements that we must attribute both the steadily progressive advance, and the splendid ultimate result that crowned it. The irregularities, the impetuosities, the passions, even the conscientious scruples of genius, have often rendered nugatory the wisest plans of parental experience; and we doubt very much that old

Zachary's scheme would have attained an equal success, had his son been such as Burns or Byron, as Shelley or Coleridge, or even as the steady, persevering, and victorious, but keen-tempered Carlyle.

In truth, it is very rare to see the means of parents, the influence of friends, the powers of talent, the application of study, and the pertinacity of effort so long and so unintermittedly exerted on a single object. The reader, perhaps, has a difficulty in realizing to himself our meaning here. It wants, however, but one word to make the whole case plain to him. Throughout the entire course of his life, even from very early student days, Thomas Babington Macaulay did nothing but,—in its own first words,—"write the history of England from the accession of James II. down to a time which is within the memory of men now living." He directly admits this: he speaks of his History as "a work which is the business and the pleasure of his life." His Essays are no less explicit. With exceptions that hardly need be noticed, the whole of them relate to that object, and several of them are actual draughts of that whole history. Consider them—Milton, Hallam's "Constitutional History

of England," Bunyan, Hampden, "Burleigh and his Times," "The War of the Spanish Succession," Horace Walpole, Sir James Mackintosh's "History of the Revolution," William Pitt, Bacon, Sir William Temple, Lord Clive, Warren Hastings, "The Comic Dramatists of the Restoration," Samuel Johnson, Frederick the Great, Madame D'Arblay, Addison, and the Earl of Chatham;—do not they relate, all of them, to the historical period in question, and have we not perhaps been too fastidious in omitting from the list Ranke's "History of the Popes," and even Southey's "Colloquies," and Gladstone "On Church and State"? Again, to stoop closer, may not the Milton, the Hallam, the Hampden, the Burleigh, the Mackintosh, and others, be regarded as successive sketches and *réchauffées* of the whole theme? It may be said, indeed, that it was not literature that his parents and friends, at all events, most probably aimed at; but our readers will have no difficulty in perceiving that even Macaulay's political life subserved, in reality, the same plan: it supplied him with means, and it extended to him the special experience necessary for the peculiar History he contemplated.

Thus then, parents, friends, position, study, and

inclination, all working together to a common end, triumph was their due, and triumph came.

But the concentration of endeavour is, on the part of Macaulay, even greater than we have yet named. A favourite position of Thomas Carlyle, in some of his earlier essays, is, that David Hume constitutes the intellectual king of these days. By this he means that the opinions, the ideas, the system of thought, the general mode and manner of intellectually looking at and judging matters which characterized that philosopher, had become the common thinking property, the common thinking furniture of the majority of leading men. Of course Carlyle by no means intends to intimate that all these leading men are of necessity sceptics, or infidels, or bound to each and every special opinion of David Hume, but simply that a certain general cast of mind which, in the case of this celebrated man, had attained to great completeness and distinctness of development, had been inherited and adopted by them. In this sense, we find ourselves constrained to say that the intellectual father of Lord Macaulay was eminently David Hume. We fancy it is always with a sense of secret satisfaction and inward complacency that Macaulay mentions the very name of Hume.

He talks of him with unction as "a great historian," and seems to linger with fond admiration over his "narrative, which is likely to last as long as the English tongue." The present generation is perhaps, on the whole, not quite disposed to extend so much of its favour to David Hume, and may question the position we assume. But one glance at the last generation, with its Godwins, Benthams, Molesworths, with even its Sir James Mackintoshes and Lord Jeffreys, will suffice for the perception of an anterior probability in regard to our opinion; and a consideration of the mental points of view common to such men as Mill and Buckle in our own day will probably confirm it.

What we would allege then is, that the young ambition of Macaulay—nay, that the enduring, life-long ambition of Macaulay—was to find himself side by side with David Hume, as the continuator of his History, and as an inseparably conjunct and equal classic. For this he amassed, even while at college, and year after year industriously afterwards, all those great stores of reading and information that bore directly or indirectly on this one subject. For this he tried himself in relevant periodical papers, and feared no waste; for he said to himself cheerily and proudly:

One day, in the long evening of my life, I will throw over these, connecting them into oneness, the bulk of an entire history, and this history, over these essays, shall be as the great dome of a cathedral that closes unitingly over its many rich and splendid chapels. But the will of man on earth can never assure itself of identity with the will of God in heaven; and Macaulay, when he had executed, with unintermitted exactitude and complete success, three-fourths of the programme he had set himself, vanished from among us, leaving in consternation before the gap of an unparalleled fragment the largest assembly of spectators that any single historian had ever seen around him.

In our view, then, the life-long aim that determined the general action of Lord Macaulay was eminently simple. A like simplicity, and of identical origin, distinguished his character, as well as all his principles, literary, political, philosophical, and religious. In fact, all that to analysis is summed up in the name of David Hume, is centrally operative in these also. And yet, at first view, the two men seem directly antagonistic. Hume was a Tory, Macaulay is a Whig; Hume was a sceptical metaphysician,

Macaulay has abandoned metaphysics; Hume ridiculed the church, Macaulay attends the church; Hume swore by Pope and sniffed at Shakespeare, Macaulay swears by Shakespeare and sniffs at Pope. Positions more diametrically opposite, and on the most important concerns of humanity, political, philosophical, religious, literary, it is impossible to find. Still it is our deep belief that no *single* phrase (*mutatis mutandis*) can more completely and comprehensively describe Thomas Babington Macaulay than this: he is David Hume in the nineteenth century, conformed to the church, and author of the continuation of "The History of England."

In truth, Hume was a Tory by Jacobitic predilection only: he was a Whig in principle—so far, at least, as we are to name that principle from the practice of the present day. What, in fact, is the system of thought that David Hume is held to represent? In one word, it is the philosophy of the eighteenth century. Now, to most of us, that one word is suggestive only of infidelity, free-thinking, deism, atheism, of scepticism in religion, of sensualism in philosophy, and of republicanism in politics. Still to apply any of these terms to the philosophy of the eighteenth

century would be to name it badly, for, though the doctrines and opinions implied in such expressions are certainly concomitants and attendants of that philosophy, they are, in reality, only phenomenal and temporary forms. English thinkers, whichever side they have taken, have been content to remain with a very indistinct, obscure, and confused consciousness on these points; and the consequence is, that at this moment we know of no single really intelligent and fully enlightened discussion of this subject in the English language. The Germans, on the contrary, have coolly turned upon it, lifted it, looked at it, and examined it piecemeal, till now, having at length fairly filled and satisfied themselves with what of instruction, negative or positive, they could extract from it, they have long since packed it up, and laid it on the shelf, labelled *Aufklärung*, a word which, meaning in its ordinary use simply enlightenment—up-lighting or lighting-up—and badly rendered *éclaircissement* by Mr. Sibree, may be here translated, with reference at once to the special up-lighting implied, and a certain notorious exposition of that up-lighting, the "Age of Reason." Now, into this subject it is not our cue to enter; it suffices our objects to say at once

that the fundamental principle of the *Aufklärung*, of the up-lighting, of the "age of reason," of the philosophy of the eighteenth century, is, in one of Lord Macaulay's favourite phrases, the right of private judgment. This really constituted the spiritual attitude of humanity— its principle—in the eighteenth century; and the majority of the reproaches usual in this connexion concern not that attitude, not that principle, but a variety of secondary or temporary phenomena, necessarily or contingently concomitant.

It will have already suggested itself perhaps, then, to our readers, that this phrase, right of private judgment, still tinged, be it observed, with the peculiar colours of its peculiar birth-time, is very fairly capable of being named the leading principle in the political, philosophical, and religious opinions of Lord Macaulay. Our space allows us only to touch such points; but we hope that the touch, light as it is, will elicit such sparks as may enable the reader to follow, more or less adequately, the general course of our thought here.

The philosophical opinions of Lord Macaulay are neither complicated nor abstruse. In his system the *à priori* has no place; everything

must demonstrate its legitimacy to him *à posteriori* and by induction. "All systems," he says, "religious, political, or scientific, are but opinions resting on evidence more or less satisfactory." With metaphysics he will not meddle; they are beyond the province of humanity. The specula tions of Hume in this field, with his "Enquiry concerning the Human Understanding," his investigation of the theory of morals, and his dis courses of Palamedes concerning the state Fourli —these speculations have no other result in the eyes of Macaulay than to demonstrate the impossibility of any rational solution on such subjects; accordingly he accepts this conclusion and will inquire no further. All, however, that Hume can teach him about "the liberty of the press," "the principles of government," "the science of politics," "parliament," "parties," "civil liberty," "commerce," "luxury," the "balance of trade," "passive obedience," and the "Protestant succession," he learns with avidity. Adam Smith, too, he makes his own. It is in the same spirit that he recurs to Bacon as to "the great apostle of experimental science." "Bacon," he says, "said nothing about the grounds of moral obligation or the freedom of the human will," but he was

mightily concerned about "utility and progress." These then, utility and progress, are to Macaulay the only recommendations. "An acre in Middlesex is better," he says, "than a principality in Utopia." And he has no patience with that philosophy which "fills the world with long words and long beards, and leaves it as wicked and as ignorant as before." He ridicules Cicero and Seneca for that, disdaining to supply, they preposterously seek to set us above, the wants of humanity. He agrees with Bacon that "the earlier Greek speculators, Democritus in particular, were superior to their more celebrated successors;" and of these latter he says: "Assuredly if the tree which Socrates planted and Plato watered, is to be judged of by its flowers and leaves, it is the noblest of trees; but if we take the homely test of Bacon, if we judge of the tree by its fruit, our opinion of it may be less favourable."

Lord Melbourne is represented to have said once—"I wish that I was as sure of any one thing as Tom Macaulay is sure of everything." Our task here is exposition and not discussion; still we cannot help remarking that the infallible correctness ascribed by Lord Melbourne to Mac-

aulay, demonstrates itself, in one or two of these passages, as, after all, human. Democritus, for example (though why the inventor of the atomic theory—so wonderfully complete in almost every detail too—and the great ancient apostle of materialism, should be so much of a favourite with both Bacon and Macaulay is very plain to us), was not earlier than Socrates, but probably several years younger. At all events, he was undoubtedly contemporary with Socrates, and long survived him. The dates of Socrates are B.C. 469-399. Democritus is said by the latest authorities to have been born in the year B.C. 460, nine years after the birth of Socrates; and he is universally admitted to have reached a great age, no less, according to some, than that of 104 years. Even should we assume B.C. 470 as the birth-year of Democritus, the state of the case would remain essentially the same. Then, again, it is too bad, and indeed rather unlucky, that Macaulay should at all quarrel with Socrates, for, in truth, Socrates is the father and founder of the very system of thought professed by Bacon and by his critic after him. The age of Pericles was also an "age of reason," an era of "up-lighting," and the principle then was the principle now, the right of

private judgment. For this condition of thought, Socrates was, though not by any means wholly, largely responsible, and he fell a victim to the offended traditional institutions which that principle insulted. But, this apart, there is another and a stronger reason why Socrates should be considered the father and founder of the system of thought which, since the time of Bacon, has been established among us, and it is this: Socrates was certainly the originator of generalization. This is indisputable; Socrates invented the express, the methodic, the scientific investigation of general ideas, just as certainly as Newton invented the theory of gravitation, and much more certainly than that Bacon was the first to recall attention —such is the merit assigned him by Macaulay— to the method of induction by experiment.

Be this as it may, and passing to the political creed of Macaulay, we find this latter of a similar colour to the philosophical. "Political science," according to him, "is progressive and experimental like the rest." "Ever since I began to observe," he remarks, "I have been seeing nothing but growth, and hearing of nothing but decay." Accordingly, he has no patience with the *laudatores temporis acti*, but declares them to be "an-

ignorant and shallow as people generally are who extol the past at the expense of the present." He affirms that "the more carefully we examine the history of the past, the more reason shall we find to dissent from those who imagine that our age has been fruitful of new social evils; the truth is, that the evils are, with scarcely an exception, old; that which is new is the intelligence which discerns and the humanity which remedies them." As regards government, then, he is clearly for the doctrines of the *passive* political economists, and stand unreservedly by an almost absolute *laissez faire.* To all poetic theories that bear on the past, he answers by bills of mortality and tables of statistics. Social evils, in his view, must in general correct themselves; he will have no inter-meddling, and confesses to a horror of all paternal government. He knows of no infallible opinion. He asks who are the wisest and best. And whose opinion is to decide that? He declares government unfit to direct our opinions, or superintend our private habits; and he sums up the whole duty of the state thus:—"Our rulers will best promote the improvement of the nation by strictly confining themselves to their own legitimate duties, by leaving capital to find its most lucrative

course, commodities their fair price, industry and intelligence their natural reward, idleness and folly their natural punishment, by maintaining peace, by defending property, by diminishing the price of law, and by observing strict economy in every department of the state."

It is evident, then, that Macaulay's political and philosophical principles go hand in hand, and that they all take origin in the philosophy of the eighteenth century. Indeed, he makes no secret of this: he openly eulogizes the Encyclopædists: and it is with great complacency that he is able to assert, "By this time the philosophy of the eighteenth century had purified English Whiggism from that deep taint of intolerance which had been contracted during a long and close alliance with the Puritanism of the seventeenth century."

This sentence brings us, by an obvious transition, to the consideration of Macaulay's religious principles; and in these, too, we shall find him a genuine son of the philosophy of the eighteenth century. The reader, however, must take great care not to misunderstand us here. We are not going to prove Macaulay an infidel; such a charge were simply the very last we should think of bringing. What may be called his private re-

ligious feelings, Lord Macaulay never obtruded on the world, and we are not going to invade them. What we have to do with here is wholly and solely the *public* religious principles of Lord Macaulay. These principles, indeed, two words shall name for us at once, and these two words are—Universal Toleration. In his own language, "he is as averse to Laud on the one hand as to Praise-God-Barebones on the other;" as averse to the Puritan as to the Catholic, as averse to the High Churchman as to the Independent. Exeter Hall is to him a place of intolerance; he sneers at its "bray," and speaks with contempt of "its prescriptive right to talk nonsense." In such sentiments, it is plain, he is David Hume all but *in propria persona.* He is the supporter of an Established Church, but were there no poor people, were there only rich people, he would be a Voluntary: and, meantime, the true arrangement appears to him to be, the Establishment of Episcopacy in England, of Presbyterianism in Scotland, and of Roman Catholicism in Ireland. Withal, he is a friend to the Dissenters, and will stand up manfully were even a Unitarian attacked. (Speech, June 6, 1854.)

The reader who will take the trouble to ex-

amine the essays on Gladstone on "Church and State," and on Ranke's "History of the Popes," will find a host of passages confirmatory of our position. He rejoices, for example, "in the immense strides that we have made, and continually make, in mathematics and the sciences," but he complains that "with theology the case is very different" He says, "As regards natural religion, we are no better off now than Thales or Simonides" The argument from design was as well known by them as by us; and "the immortality of the soul is as indemonstrable now as ever." "It is a mistake," he asserts, "to imagine that subtle speculations touching the divine attributes, the origin of evil, the necessity of human actions, the foundation of moral obligation, imply any high degree of intellectual culture. Such speculations, on the contrary, are, in a peculiar manner, the delight of intelligent children and of half-civilized men" "But," he goes on to say, "neither is revealed religion of the nature of progressive science;" and he remarks, significantly, that "Catholic communities have, since the end of the sixteenth century, become infidel and become Catholic again; but never have become Protestant." It seems to him that "we have no security

for the future against the prevalence of any theological error that ever has prevailed in time past among Christian men;" and of the Roman Catholic Church he observes: "When we reflect on the tremendous assaults which she has survived, we find it difficult to conceive in what way she is to perish." He thinks of Sir Thomas More and his belief in transubstantiation, of Samuel Johnson and certain of his foibles, of such subtle intellects as Bayle and Chillingworth becoming, after years of scepticism, Catholics, and so, "for these reasons, he has ceased to wonder at any vagaries of superstition." Very Humian is the remark: "It is by no means improbable that zealots may have given their lives for a religion which had never effectually restrained their vindictive or their licentious passions." Here, too, is a touch as if by the very pen of the same master; remarking of sects that, in power, they are bigoted, insolent, and cruel, he adds that, "when out of power, they find it barbarous to punish men for entertaining conscientious scruples about a garb, about a ceremony," etc. The same spirit is seen in this: "We frequently see inquisitive and restless spirits, after questioning the existence of a Deity, bring themselves to worship a wafer."

Passages of this kind abound in Macaulay, and even others of a still more Humian type, but these must suffice.

There is, however, a class of turns in Macaulay which have been ascribed to the circumstances of his early breeding, but which we are disposed to attribute to the same influence of Hume. Of these we should wish to give here a sample or two. Speaking in his *History* of Wharton, he remarks: "His father was renowned as a distributor of Calvinistic tracts, and a patron of Calvinistic divines: the boy's first years were passed amidst Geneva bands, heads of lank hair, upturned eyes, nasal psalmody, and sermons three hours long." This description is so applicable to the circumstances of Macaulay's own boyhood, that surely, if we are to ascribe the use of such language to his early breeding, it must be by means of the principle, not of action, but of reaction. In fact, there cannot be a doubt that the feeling at the bottom of such phrases is one not of reverence, but of latent derision. Macaulay, in truth, has a weakness for what we shall name a patrician or aristocratic subrision. He tells us, for example, that the French courtiers "sneeringly" remarked of their Grand Monarque, that he was

in the right "not to expose to serious risk a life invaluable to his people." The sneer here is unconcealed then; and there can be no doubt that when he speaks of being brought to worship a wafer, as in a sentence just quoted, he is there, too, in the act of enjoying a gentle subrision. Now it appears to us that the following sentences are constructed on a similar model; and, if allowed to be subrisory, they must be pronounced eminently Humian.

"Those sectaries had no scruple about smiting tyrants with the sword of Gideon." "Here and there an Achan had disgraced the good cause by stooping to plunder the Canaanites, whom he ought only to have smitten." "Crawford was what they called a professor; his letters and speeches are, to use his own phraseology, exceeding savoury." "They invited Amalek and Moab to come back and try another chance with the chosen people." "These pious acts, prompted by the Holy Spirit, were requited by an untoward generation with," etc. "A pious, honest, and learned man, but of slender judgment, and half crazed by his persevering endeavours to extract from Daniel and the Revelations some information about the Pope and the King of France."

If these extracts be compared with the quotations in reference to Wharton and Louis XIV., no reader can mistake the true nature of their spirit. The turn in the last, indeed, is quite unmistakable without collation, and would hardly satisfy Dr. Cumming or the author of the "Coming Struggle." We had marked several other passages for quotation; but we think that sufficient evidence has now been led to establish the truth of our assertion, that the public religious position of Macaulay is very similar to that of David Hume. Macaulay, in fact, will not entertain any question of religion in any matters of public and general application, with the single exception of an Established Church; and, as we have seen, he is not solicitous about the special nature of such Church, so long as it is simply established by the will of the majority. Like Hume, in truth, there are two things, in a religious sense, which Macaulay cordially hates. Hume names the one "superstition" and the other "enthusiasm." Of Macaulay's feelings toward the former we have already seen enough. His notions of the latter are implied in all that he says relative to bigots and fanatics. But nowhere are his thoughts seen clearer than in his account of George

Fox, the Quaker, or in his description (Ranke's "Popes") of a converted tinker, whom the Roman Church, unlike the Protestant, he says, would have turned to its own service. In these, his cold statement of religious experiences reads like an extract from some medical work pathologically relating the symptoms and progress of some bodily malady. Such things involve a process that seems alien to him; for the most part, he looks on with disgust and scorn, or, at best, with curiosity and compassion. No; all Macaulay's sympathies are with the temporal; and when the subject of religion occurs to be taken up, it is simply viewed as one of the other material interests. It is very characteristic of him to remark, that "Catholicism is the most attractive of all superstitions," and that "the Jewish religion, of all erroneous religions, is the least mischievous." In short, when he says of Danby, "His attachment to Episcopacy and the Liturgy were rather political than religious," the dictum, without straining and without uncharity, might easily receive a wider application.

Those of our readers who know anything of the French philosopher Comte, or of his English disciple Buckle, will, we daresay, have already per-

ceived that the opinions of these "philosophers" are not only similar, but even constitute a natural termination to those of Macaulay. They, as is well known, would sneer into annihilation all metaphysics and all theology, and would wish to see thought restricted to the observation and registration of phenomena. Well, Macaulay too takes his stand by induction, which just means the observation and registration of phenomena: he too rejects metaphysics; and if he does not wholly reject theology, he restricts it to a province certainly of the narrowest. The very law of necessary connexion (a phrase borrowed from Hume, to whom, however, *necessity of connexion* existed not, but only *constancy of conjunction*), by means of which the Comtists seek to transform the manifestations of our intellectual and moral faculties into mere links of the same great chain of cause and effect which physical things obey, seems not without a certain attraction for Macaulay also. Talking of our tendency to regard the Golden Age as left behind us in the past, he says: "This is chiefly to be ascribed to a law as certain as the laws which regulate the succession of the seasons and the course of the trade-winds: it is the nature of man to overrate present

evil and to underrate present good—to long for what he has not and to be dissatisfied with what he has."

We should be glad to join issue on several of these points, and to discuss them at length, but such is not our present object, and here we have no sufficient space. We content ourselves with saying, for the sake of our own position with the reader, that while we do not look on the philosophy of the eighteenth century with unmingled satisfaction, we certainly regard that of Messrs. Comte and Buckle with unqualified reprobation and contempt. Further, we think that the functions of government are not of a negative nature only (exclusively restricted to the protection of person and property), but capable of an affirmative application also. Macaulay, indeed, is here in reality at variance with himself; for, in regard to a national church and a national school, he actually concedes to government a function evidently affirmative. We, for our part, see no reason—and we are sure that Lord Macaulay could not have assigned one—why the affirmative function should stop there, and are inclined to believe that, in this connexion, there is a science (social science) opening, of which Lord Macaulay, in his

own bitter words to Southey, "had yet to learn the alphabet." Again, we believe that physical truth would be an inexplicable and indeed meaningless fragment—so much mere purposeless *flotsam*—were it not there for, and did it not terminate in, metaphysical truth. Then religion is to us the tap-root of humanity, and all else is but nauci, flocci, minimi, pili. Neither can we allow that metaphysics, morals, and religion are, either severally or collectively, destitute of progress. Very far from that, we believe that the final cause of the world is neither more nor less *than* such progress, and that history has no theme whatever but, intellectually, morally, and religiously, the enlargement and enfranchisement of the consciousness of man. Progress, however, we do not view as, so to speak, fluent extension; we should name it rather a series of consecutive and accumulative progresses. The history of civilisation is a history of civilisations—a history of higher following on lower dispensations; the tree of existence, the Yggdrasil of our Norse forefathers, decays as surely as it grows, but it grows as surely as it decays, and each new growth is larger, fuller, braver than the last. This tree has successively grown up and withered down, in India, Mesopotamia, Egypt,

Greece, and Italy; it is now in full leaf in England, but a thousand years hence it may be budding and blossoming elsewhere.

We have now obtained for ourselves an insight, more or less clear, more or less complete, into the principles and aim with which Lord Macaulay entered on the arena of life; let us now see how he, so accoutred and impelled, bore himself, and what were the products of his so guided and directed industry.

When Macaulay left college for London in 1825, he carried with him a very complete knowledge of the Greek and Latin classics, as well as a competent acquaintance with the leading literatures of modern Europe. He does not seem to have ever attempted to realize to himself an intellectual conception of the Greeks or Romans as human beings, and in relation to universal history; but the literary masterpieces of these peoples were fairly stored in his excellent memory, where his exceedingly sound and discriminating taste had well arranged, shelved, and lettered them. His knowledge of modern literature was also evidently extensive, and, on the whole, exact. The classic Italians, and the French writers of the age of Louis XIV., he had manifestly studied with great

care, and discussed in his own mind with great discernment. We have also occasional notices from him of German and Spanish authors, and even a quotation or two in these languages; but though he had indubitably attained to a very considerable and satisfactory conception of the main merits of these literatures, still it appears probable to us that Macaulay could not have justly claimed the title of either a German or a Spanish scholar. Macaulay, in fact, was a man of great practical perspicacity, and we do not believe that he would have willingly carried one ounce more weight than was necessary to his purpose. We find him, for example, contented to remain with but slender mathematical acquirements; and nowhere is there the slightest evidence that he ever troubled his head about Egypt's place in universal history, the Hindu Vedas, the origin of society in Central Asia, the migration of the tribes, or the philological relations of Turan and Iran. The preference of Italian and French to German and Spanish, then, is in complete harmony with our Humian theory; and we can easily believe that any study of these latter languages resulted fully as much from the set of the times as from expectation of help towards his peculiar object.

But, besides these literary and academic stores, even in 1825 Macaulay had already made great progress in the study of English history and politics, especially during those reigns that were characterized by the growth and evolution of what are named constitutional principles. Indeed, so engrossed is he in this study, that in his very first article of any note (Milton, *Edin. Rev.* 1825), he cannot resist the temptation to intercalate an historical summary. Analogous but more extended historical summaries followed in the Hallam, the Hampden, the Burleigh, and others. So very similar, indeed, are these summaries, and so frequently do they recur, that one gets to feel a little surprise at the favour that allowed even a Macaulay to insert and re-insert, and yet again insert, what was mainly nothing more than the *rifacci-mento* of an old material.

The *History* would lead us to suppose, as we have already shown, that a certain reaction really had taken place in Macaulay against the Calvinism of his friends. There is no evidence of this, however, in the early essays. It is possible, indeed, that the studies and experiences of the university may have taught him to regard the system of religious thought under his father's

roof as biassed and narrow; but nowhere can we find any evidence of a youthful, a poetic, or an aristocratic revolt against it. His clear, sound judgment sees well where he is placed, and what his friends are worth to him; he remains on the best terms with them, he supports their views, he makes speeches for them, but still he takes up his own position calmly in the centre, as that constitutional Whig which his historical studies recommend to him. The same clear, practical judgment that has decided his choice leads him again to perceive that it is wisest for him, once having chosen, to declare himself. Accordingly, he is quite open in his avowal that he "would be first an Englishman and then a Whig," and he takes his side in the most public and unhesitating fashion.

The young man, who has such friends and connexions, who has distinguished himself so much at college, who has spoken so well at Abolition meetings, who has written such capital articles in the *Edinburgh*, who is so manifestly a true Whig that he knows more about Whig history, and can give better expression to Whig principles than the very best Whig among them, is not long left without public employment. He is made a

Commissioner of Bankruptcy, and so early as 1830 a seat in Parliament is found for him. He enters Parliament at a most important crisis too. The great Reform Bill is in the agonies of gestation, and the Whigs are troubled with the most natural solicitude. The young man of thirty is too sagacious not to discern all the possibilities of the position. He is possessed, withal, of such vigour of will as enables him to convert his perceptions into deeds. He throws himself, though new to the House, completely into the situation. He becomes one of the leading supporters of Government. Indeed, his services are soon such that, in less than four years, a most lucrative appointment is found for him —an appointment so lucrative that in three years he is able to return from India, where he held it, the recipient of an opulent and lordly income.

Macaulay is not yet thirty-eight, then, and we already see how well the aim he set himself has thriven with him. His practical experience of Parliament and of India is an incalculable gain to him in his vocation of historian. All this time, too, his studies on the one concentrated subject have never slackened. We can trace their progress in the series of essays already more

than once referred to. Indeed, these studies seem thoroughly ripe now, and even the execution of his design largely accomplished. What a happy prospect gilds all the west for him at the early age of thirty-eight!—he has wealth, he has position, he has honour, he has even in a goodly state of forwardness the one work which was to be "the business and the pleasure of his life." Naught remains for him but, in the midst of leisure, in the midst of all the *agrémens* of the most choice society in the world, a member of Parliament even, for he may make the duties light, that he finish his work, that he build the temple, and transform to enclosed chapels those gorgeous Clives and magnificent Hastingses. Accordingly such is the position that we see him assume for the remainder of his days. And in such position he is able to do such services to the Whigs, and gain such honour in the eyes of his fellow-countrymen, that in 1857 a patent of nobility is conferred on him. But, alas! the labours, that wore now the look of pastime and recreation rather than drudgery and penance, and to the termination of which he might, so far as his age was concerned, look not too presumptuously forward, were destined to be snapped asunder in the

midst, and remain for ever a fragment merely. On the 28th day of December 1859 (just fifty-nine years of age), Lord Macaulay died, and the continuation of Hume remains itself to be continued.

Some of his too ardent admirers have not scrupled to claim for Lord Macaulay the *first* place as orator, poet, essayist, and historian. This claim, so put, we think insupportable. These admirers themselves describe the speeches of Lord Macaulay as but spoken essays ; and they give, besides, such an account of the deficiency of his voice and the stiffness of his action as demonstrates the nullity of their own claim, so far as the orator is concerned. For our part we find the speeches to read exceedingly well, and we cannot admit that they have only the character of spoken essays. On the contrary, we find in them not the mere fluent continuousness of writing, but the energetic interruptedness, and, as it were, the successive hammer-strokes of actual speech. On this head it will suffice to say, however, that they are well-worded pieces of excellent generalization and clear judgment. The Whigs, though probably sometimes quivering with misgivings that he was going too far, must on the whole, have been much enlightened and very much gratified

by those admirable expositions of their own principles.

In regard to the "Lays of Ancient Rome," the *Times* writes thus :—"As a poet, at a time when it was supposed that nothing new could be invented, he struck out a style, the enchantment of which is felt by all ages and all conditions alike, which has no prototype in ancient, no parallel in modern times; which unites the simplicity of our ancient ballads with the rich images and stirring dialogue of the epic, often sweetly descending to an idyllic character, reminding us of the happier passages of Theocritus." The authority is unimpeachable and the testimony clear, nevertheless we cannot help thinking that both the *Times* and Lord Macaulay have made a sad mistake here. It is our deliberate belief, in short, that the "Lays of Ancient Rome" are—bearing in mind that their author is a man of the quickest intellect, and of the most cultivated taste—not poetry, but, so far as we understand the word, doggrel. Macaulay, in talking of his Mulgraves, Rochesters, Montagues, Dorsets, etc., laments that their poetry should have been preserved to mislead us only in forming a judgment of their characters and talents otherwise. We think it very possible that some future historian may repeat Macaulay's remark, and of Mac-

aulay's own case. Again: it is of Addison's poetry that our essayist himself remarks: "Ever since the time of Pope there has been a glut of lines of this sort, and we are now as little disposed to admire a man for being able to write them as for being able to write his name." Even so; and *à fortiori* (since the Percy Ballads) in regard to the "Lays of Ancient Rome." O up

> "Got brave Dick Turpin,
> And he swore by the mass
> That he would ride to York city,
> All on his steed Black Bess!"

Positively such stuff as this may, in certain circumstances, be bearable. But, O the brave Me-zen-ti-us! and O the brave Ho-ra-ti-us! are worse than the bagpipes as described by Shakespeare. We hear at once the true Whitechapel *skirl*, and in such barbarous union with the sacred names of another world and of other associations that we involuntarily stop our ears, fain to exclude a positive pain. For it is to be recollected that the hearing of some ballads bawled in Whitechapel is said to have suggested these extraordinary hermaphrodites. This origin, whether feigned or true, is certainly most apposite.

The truth is, in an age that regarded poetry so high as ours does, the self-complacence of a

successful author, who could do almost everything well, and who had written prize poems in his youth, could not resist a clutch at the bays of the bard; but he signally missed, and we only wish that he himself had had the opportunity, in the case of somebody else, to point the moral. For us, to be sure, there is some consolation in the inimitable sentence of the *Times;* we should be sorry to forget that sweet descent to Theocritus and the idyllic. We must do ourself the justice, however, to say one word on "Ivry." This is a piece of true merit, full of spirit and energy. Had Macaulay preserved no other poem but this, though it could never have sufficed to entitle him to the name of poet, it would have been there, a proof of versatility, and it would always have been taken into account in every estimate of the essayist and historian.

These words bring us to the true functions of Macaulay, and to the true scenes of his triumphs.

The essays, as we have seen, are often written, so to speak, in aid of the *History,* and assume, for the most part, the character of preliminary draughts, or of collateral complements. Some among them display, as reviews, a rare excellence of a technical kind. An admirable sample of

such excellence is the "Southey" (1830); indeed, a more perfect *business* article we do not recollect ever to have read. Reviewing, in Macaulay's own words, is certainly "to a critic an easy and habitual act" in this case. The "Robert Montgomery" is, to be sure, quite as business-like; but the game there comes too thick on us; it is a *battue* we assist at; sport becomes slaughter, and we cease to have interest in it. But in the "Southey," the *coups d'adresse* and the *tours de force* are captivating beyond comparison. How the poor laureate must have writhed under the dexterous touches of this finest and supplest of whips! Macaulay has here a subject entirely within his range; his style is now full-fledged too, and his manner perfect There is, perhaps, a little fine malice towards the Tory poet lurking in the heart of the Whig reviewer; at all events he feels that the Tory poetry of politics, as expounded by Southey, is powerless against his own Whig prose, and he marches to battle with the gayest confidence. Not one word is ever wasted, not a single sentence falls in vain. Points and edges glitter everywhere; incisions gape to every stroke, and punctures follow to every thrust. Verily this is elastic writing, vigorous,

rapid, true. What irony, what sarcasm, what fine derision perfectly cut into words! "Mr. Southey," he remarks, "brings to the task two faculties which were never, we believe, vouchsafed in measure so copious to any human being—the faculty of believing without a reason, and the faculty of hating without a provocation." How finely he says too:—"Government is to Mr. Southey one of the fine arts: he judges of a theory, of a public measure, of a religion or a political party, of a peace or a war, as men judge of a picture or a statue, by the effect produced on his imagination: a chain of association is to him what a chain of reasoning is to other men, and what he calls his opinions are, in fact, merely his tastes." Expression here is surely in perfect adequacy with the thought; and all these exquisite little turns are weighty as bullets and precious as gold. Then, withal, he is so true and discriminating, truer, perhaps, and more discriminating in his praise than in his blame: when he applauds, he approves himself such a critic as even Southey himself must accept with entire satisfaction.

Speaking of Mr. Southey's poems he says:—"The short pieces are worse than Pye's and as

bad as Cibber's." "The longer pieces," he continues, "though full of faults, are nevertheless very extraordinary productions." He doubts "greatly whether they will be read fifty years hence;" but has no doubt that, if read, "they will be admired." How admirably true, telling, and trenchant, every one who knows anything of the subject must feel this criticism! In this most felicitous paper panegyric itself has the effect of the most cutting satire, as where the reviewer says of the "Life of Nelson:"—"It would not in all literary history be easy to find a more exact hit between wind and water." Then how relentlessly the Whig constitutionalist insists on holding up to the theoretic dreams of the Tory poet his bundles of statistical tables and his rolls of mortality bills! Southey has not the ghost of a chance with him; the facts are so strong that they need advance only in the lightest badinage, the easiest persiflage. Mr. Southey, the reviewer says, resembles Milton's Satan, who contrived to travel round the world "always in the dark;" and he adds—and in the addition we see the rapier *home*—"it is not everybody who could have so dexterously avoided blundering on the daylight in the course of a journey to the antipodes." The whole essay

abounds in the most exquisite expressions, the most vivid and effective figures. There is wit, allusion, illustration; no element fails. All the arts of this species of composition are present in profusion, and Macaulay approves himself a finished craftsman.

Macaulay's longest essay, and perhaps the most elaborate, is the "Bacon." The power of writing has now come to full maturity with him; nay, we are not sure but that the fulness is excessive and runs over; we are not sure but that the art has run away with the artist. Has anybody not on business ever read this essay without more than one of those intercalatory relaxations familiarly known as *skips?* The facts in Bacon's life are few, and Macaulay tells us nothing new in regard to them. Still the river of words flows on copiously, endlessly. *This* is discussed and *that* is discussed, and not a stitch is dropped, and the whole subject must be *exhaustively* treated. And sure enough it is exhaustively treated; the teeth of wolf never stripped a bone more exhaustively clean. Let the reader in search of proof turn only to the discussion of the question of philosophy that terminates the essay, and which really a page or two might have contained, and

he will find that it takes up about twice the space of the essay he is now reading. This excessive copiousness is decidedly a blot, then. Still, the living, leafy, wide-stretching boughs into which the writer's art transforms the mere dead and fragmentary fallen twigs of truth are wonderful, and we are kept in continual admiration of the constant unexceptionable writing, the constant interesting pictures, the constant luminous good sense, and the constant appearance of research.

The "Samuel Johnson" (1831) is one of Macaulay's most celebrated and characteristic essays; and certainly perhaps there is no more vivid, no more graphic, no more racy piece of writing in the language. The style is terse, clear, keen, while there are a fulness and a rapid continuance of utterance that hurry us triumphantly along with the stream of expression. Still we cannot help seeing that it is a tale dressed up, that effect is aimed at, and that effect alone is aimed at. The truth of the matter is evidently not by any means of vital importance to the writer; not that he despises, or at all wishes to neglect truth, but just because his object has no present relation with truth. In fact, the aim here is not instruction at all; there is no thought of a

lesson; the wish is amusement, entertainment, interest only. The desire, too, is accomplished, for the essay is as successful as any series of dissolving views. It is bright, glittering, brilliant, but—we must say it—it is shallow. It deals with the outside only—with the hull, the husk, the poor scrofula-scarred body, and not with the soul of Johnson. How different the Johnson of Carlyle! There it is not the squalid, unsweet giant in dirty linen, gobbling and slobbering, with straining eyeballs, over his victuals, that we see. No; there it is the humble pious heart, the strong sense, the understanding solid, weighty as granite; or again, it is the great doubt riven soul that would have peace in God and a world of far other interests than the pettinesses of time.

Macaulay, in fact, has no business with such a soul as this of Johnson. Instead of seeing it, understanding it, loving it, he maunders about Johnson's credulity in matters spiritual, and his incredulity in matters temporal, and enjoys his own enlightened subrision over "superstition." We have here, indeed, an excellent specimen of what is one of Macaulay's main recommendations to the general reader—a delight in gathering and a power of painting personal peculiarities. Mac-

aulay is never more at home than in such scandal: the eating, drinking, and clothing of men, their mistresses, their warts, their bandy legs, or their red noses—Macaulay has, in such curiosities, absolutely the *furore* of a collector. Now such things were so abundant in poor Johnson that Macaulay saw nothing else. As Johnson was a Tory indeed, Macaulay did not care to see anything else. For that Macaulay yielded to the bias of party is as certain as that Johnson himself so yielded. He (Macaulay) talks of the Tories at times as if they were wolves. "The howl," he says, "which the whole pack set up for prey and for blood appalled even him who had aroused and unchained them." It is this same party influence that leads him to write with such partiality of Addison and such hatred of Pope. He labours under a jaundice of this sort, so deep, indeed, that even the poor dwarfed, deformed, diseased body of Pope seems to excite feelings of detestation in him; and he speaks of it as legitimate game for Addison, had Addison chosen to revenge himself for the lines on Atticus. Macaulay is, if possible, more unjust to Johnson than to Pope, however; he sneers at his works, talks of them passing into oblivion, and seems quite to ignore all the great

qualities of that true Englishman. If he could see nothing in Johnson's criticisms, or in his biographies—if the melancholy wisdom of a lifetime, which is the burthen of "Rasselas," had no worth for him—if he had no gratitude for the Dictionary even, surely he might have recollected that this was the man who wrote the letter to Chesterfield, a piece of manliness and of unsurpassed felicity of expression, that will be alive, we doubt not, when even "Clive" and "Warren Hastings" have ceased to interest.

We would not have the reader suppose, however, that we undervalue the two celebrated essays just mentioned. The *History* has absorbed and superseded some of the very best of the others; but these still remain in their own entire and undiminished proportions, the most prominent, the most attractive, and, probably without exception, the most universally read of all Macaulay's writings.

Beyond all doubt there are no themes in the history of the world better adapted for the peculiar pen of Macaulay than the characters and deeds of these, the two most famous, or infamous, of all our Indian proconsuls. It is to the imagination that Macaulay prefers to address himself; and

here certainly, if anywhere, there were materials enough to aid him in such a purpose. In the background we have the vague splendour of the East; the snows of mightier hills ascend; the beams of a mightier sun pour forth; strange cupolas loom through the haze of heat, and minarets of other creeds glance; palaces of marble rise with chambers where the air is heavy with the pomp of hangings, and opulent with the lustre of jewelry and gold. In the foreground, heroes, single-handed, scatter armies, or burst into the secret treasure-houses of Arabian story. Nor is the thrill wanting that these are Englishmen, and that the name of England has been made a name of terror and fascination by them in every town and hamlet of these enchanted regions.

In these gorgeous essays, the style corresponds admirably with the material on which it is employed, and with the startling events which it relates. It is dyed in a thousand colours; it glitters with a thousand points; and the swiftness of its speed is as the rush of the eager victor through the broken wreck of the terrified foe that flees. Still this is the highest praise that can be awarded these essays; it is not for any quality of thought that they are valuable; they are

scenic merely. Indeed, we fear the lesson they teach is of no good tendency; the imagination is kindled up into admiration of material riches and material power, while actions black with perfidy or red with blood are allowed, in all this earthly and earthy splendour, almost to hide themselves. We fear that such men as Clive and Hastings have been too often taken as exemplars by our countrymen in the East; that hatred to our name, the deeper for suppression, results; and that for all this, the essayist, who preferred an audience of the imagination to one of reason, is very seriously to blame.

But *the* book of Macaulay is undoubtedly his *History*. Its foundation has been laid as far back as the very first stirrings of literary ambition—a lifetime of study, a lifetime of experience had collected the materials, and a lifetime of labour had been employed on the work. It is a national loss that it remains unfinished, for never perhaps were theme and historian so well adapted to each other; and never perhaps had historian manifested a similar amount, as well of concentration of design as of continuousness of preparation. The theme was the constitutional history of England; and Hallam himself had no superiority over

Macaulay in clear recognition of the true constitutional principles. There was here a certain groundwork of reason and philosophy, then, to impart unity and coherency to the whole; and to this groundwork of philosophy the workman was thoroughly equal. But, in addition, there were a hundred elements, for the elaboration of which it was precisely this workman that possessed the necessary skill. There were marches, and progresses, and processions, and the fierce tides of battle. There were parliaments, and the fights of parties, the reasons *pro* and the reasons *con*, and the triumphant tellings of the ayes and noes. Manners there were to paint and characters to draw, containing both of them an inexhaustible store of those salient peculiarities that constitute the quaint, the odd, the curious, the original. In short, here was a theme that required precisely such an historian; and here was an historian that required precisely such a theme. We really believe that there does not exist in any language reading more captivating than this *History*. The interest of Carlyle's *French Revolution* is certainly at times infinitely more intense, but one cannot get rid of a feeling of a certain interruptedness, a certain inequality in that work, while

the march of Macaulay is never either accelerated or retarded.

We should name the style in Macaulay's earlier writings, a transparent but flushed rapidity. But as regards the style of the *History*, while the transparency has been allowed to remain, and in greater perfection than before, the rapidity has been mitigated and the flush removed. What was transparent but flushed rapidity is now transparent complacent fluency. The river has reached the plain, and gently subsides into a wide smilingness of flow, as if grateful for the broad ease it feels.

If such was the style, the mental attributes of Macaulay, now mellow in maturity, were equally well adapted to the task. There was a judgment tamed into the measure of success by its very circumspection, its very ascription to the general philosophy of the eighteenth century—a judgment which, within this range, was luminously clear and sharply precise. There was a memory eminently retentive, ready, and suggestive, stored, too, with material, teeming with illustration, prompt with allusion. There was a fancy exceedingly vivid, quick, and fertile. It was a source of facility and success, too, that so much had been already done,

that it was a more than thrice-told tale that was in question, that nothing goaded to overspeed, that all conduced to the adoption of the calm, the leisurely, the placid. Accordingly a result so splendid has been produced that its incompletion will remain the lament of our latest literature. "*In lenocinio commendationis dolor est manus, cum id ageret, extincta.*"

It is not to be supposed, however, that Macaulay has no faults; such a consummation is not for humanity. Faults he has, and great ones, up from mere qualities of style to attributes of intellect. In style, for example, despite his many true merits, Macaulay cannot be regarded as the very highest master. A nature so remarkably facile, adroit, and quick as his found no difficulty in appropriating the lesson, taught by so many contemporaries, of a more living picturesqueness and of a more natural reality in writing. That this is an age of photography holds as true of the domain of the pen as of that of the pencil; and Macaulay yielded like others to the fascination of the new trick. His deepest sympathies, nevertheless, are with the writers of the eighteenth century, and theirs was the style which his judgment, at bottom, really approved. That style he

might quicken with measures, or freshen with colours, borrowed from the new; but it was that style that, in the main, should still be his. Accordingly he abounds in the stock metaphor, the stock transition, the stock equipoise, the stock rhetoric, the stock expedients generally of Addison, Robertson, Goldsmith, Smollett, but especially David Hume. Phrases analogous to "sinks into insignificance" are common with him; he constantly tells us of men of "parts," that so and so had "parts;" and he speaks of "the nerves of the mind." We can have, by oversight, even such a sentence as this from him: "Though his wasted and suffering body could hardly move without support --he *flew* to London" On the whole, the style of Macaulay is one rather of culture than creation. Rarely do we find in it any of those peculiarly delicate, almost evanescent turns by which the new thought of an original writer announces itself

Another fault of Macaulay, begun probably under the influence of Hume, and increased by Parliamentary experience, is the tediousness with which he expatiates on the *pros* and *cons* of party. He is never better pleased than when he gets the two parties on "the floor of the House," and has

an opportunity of conjecturally cataloguing all the motives and opinions, probable or possible, on the one side and the other. This is a trick of Hume's too, but Macaulay feels absolutely in his element here, and cannot persuade himself to quit but with the flush of triumph over the majority of the ayes and the minority of the noes.

Macaulay seems, and is generally reckoned, a great master of portrait painting. So far as striking epithets and sharp well-defined predication are concerned, Macaulay certainly deserves the praise. The words applied do indeed seem so trenchant, that the man, we are tempted to believe, must be cut out by them; and very often the *person*, at all events, is cut out by them. Johnson, Horace Walpole, James I., James II., William III., and some others, are certainly actually *seen* by the reader. William III., indeed, is not only seen, but even, perhaps, understood. But this is not the case with the characters generally. Those Sunderlands, Arlingtons, Cliffords, Ashleys, Montagues, Russells, Hamiltons, etc. etc., have all of them been successively and individually introduced to us, and with the most brilliantly specific language; still we find that they all retreat, as we leave them, into a vague distance. where they

become more and more shadowy, and finally disappear. We have not, after all, seen what manner of men they were; these sharp and telling predicates gave us them in pieces only, and it is in vain we seek to find them coherent in a whole. How different Carlyle! One word, and we have Robespierre, or Mirabeau, or Danton, or Calonne, or Vergniaud, and we never lose them. They are men and realities to us for ever, and not mere bundles of qualities artfully stuffed out by brilliant predication. This is the difference of art. Carlyle seeks to seize his man in the very centre of his nature, in that one quality that harmonizes all the varieties and diversities of his actions. Macaulay, by collecting all these varieties and diversities *ab extra,* seeks to put together a figure which, unprovided with this central and uniting knot, falls all abroad in pieces again. The stupid phrase, "such is the inconsistency of human nature," which occurs so frequently in Macaulay, is, in reality, only a consolation addressed to himself on a dimly-felt failure in construing of the kind alluded to. "The character of Harley," says Macaulay, "is to be collected from innumerable panegyrics and lampoons; from the works and the private correspondence of Swift, Pope, Arbuthnot, Prior,

and Bolingbroke, and from multitudes of such works as 'Ox and Bull,' 'The High German Doctor,' and the 'History of Robert Powell, the Puppet Showman.'" This we believe to be evidence crucially decisive of the truth of our judgment here. It is perfectly plain from these words, that Macaulay sought to construct Harley out of a thousand piecemeal materials gathered from without. In this way, indeed, a figure (but in perpetual danger of instant dissolution) may be pieced together, but never an actual human character realized to thought. Such human character, instantly found in what it says *itself*, is seldom or never found in what is said *of* it. And this is the secret of Carlyle's art: he searches for the one look, the one gesture, the one act, the one word that gives ingress to the inner whole, and never troubles himself to gather from without the scattered beams of manifestation, knowing well that no sheaf, however large, collected in that way, will ever enable him to restore the original luminary.

But if it be thus with the characters of Macaulay, an analogous inexactitude frequently accompanies his statements of fact. And here it is the celebrated descriptive chapter which will

best illustrate our views. The subject of that chapter is eminently suited to Macaulay, both as regards his outward execution and his inward habit of thought. As regards the former, he had to describe contrasts (in reference to our own times) adapted to interest and pleasingly surprise the very shallowest faculties, while, as regards the latter, the burthen of the story was progress, moral and intellectual progress. But what a remarkable easiness and indifference of temper he manifests in the collecting and selecting of his materials! The most of them are collected from writers fifty or sixty years later than the period described; and the most of these writers are *novelists.* His one great authority for a very large portion of the contents of that chapter is unquestionably *Roderick Random.* The incidents of travelling, the state of the roads, the highwaymen, the tricks of London, the squire, the curate, are all to be found there. And certainly it is quite true that in the novels of Smollett and Fielding there is, as Thackeray observes, a very great amount of historical truth "in solution." Still, Macaulay has taken this observation a great deal too much *au pied de la lettre,* and it is simply ridiculous to put up Orson Topehall, a prey to all

the rascality of London, as the normal English squire of the day. Still more ridiculous is it to represent the curate Shuffle, whom Roderick Random finds drinking, smoking, and fiddling in the alehouse, as the true type of the priest of that time. Would we be historically accurate should we assume Sir Pitt Crawley to represent the baronetage, and Lord Verisopht the peerage of our own days? Out of the smells of the Thames and the Serpentine, out of the painted harlots who, morning and evening, infest Regent Street, and out of the skittle-sharpers, and hundreds the like, of whom we hear daily in the newspapers, would it not be easy to furbish up a picture of these days as piquant and racy, but at the same time quite as fallacious as Macaulay's representation of the times of our ancestors?

The reader, we daresay, recollects the description of the English traveller in the Highlands, rising in the morning from the bare earth, blind with smoke, mad with itch, etc.: Macaulay tells us himself the source from which he derives all these and other extraordinary particulars. In a note he says: "Almost all these circumstances are taken from Burt's letters; for the tar I am indebted to Cleland's poetry." His manner of

working is here evident, then: the statements of a single writer are conclusive to him. The evidence of a single witness is accepted as true, and not only as regards the particular facts to which that witness speaks, but in a generalized application that infinitely exceeds and transcends the testimony. Then an accidental notice, in some forgotten verses, of tar seen on some individual Highlander, is eagerly accepted, and affixed as a general characteristic, not necessarily for its truth, but simply for the additional spice and point it lends to the story. We see here, indeed, another great distinction between Macaulay and Carlyle. In regard to any character, scene, action, or event, Carlyle strives, nay, we may say, convulses himself (so earnest is he) to attain to *the* picture, while Macaulay, for his part, is content, in such circumstances to attain to *a* picture. This difference between these writers is conclusively distinct. Macaulay again is certainly always diligent; he reads and excerpts indefatigably; but he does not, like Carlyle, spend days and nights in thought as to what is to be believed, as to how the matter really stood. Both have studied the same materials, and it is eminently characteristic of both that, in regard to the battle of Dunbar, to

take but a small instance, while Macaulay adheres to the old picturesque story about Cromwell thanking the Lord for the Scots leaving the high ground, Carlyle, by dint of research, endless sifting, and accurate personal inspection, has realized for us a new, and true, and infinitely more picturesque "drove" of Dunbar. Another difference between these writers is that Carlyle possesses dramatic art in very great perfection, while in this respect Macaulay is largely deficient. The latter is undoubtedly entitled to the praise, ascribed by Carlyle to Hume, of "epic clearness," but it is Carlyle himself who can alone lay claim to the greater praise of dramatic intensity. The fall of Loménie de Brienne, and that of Robespierre are really very complete dramas. But the most important contrast between Carlyle and Macaulay lies in their immensely different intellectual point of view. Macaulay ignores the metaphysical and spiritual, and seeks to surround himself by a well understood and well arranged temporal. He stands as strongly by the *Philosophy of the Conditioned* as Sir William Hamilton himself: it is as clear to him as to this philosopher that the unconditioned extremes are mutually contradictory, and he will not waste his

time on them. The supernatural element is a problem quite beyond us; and he, for his part, will content himself with this truth, that the really best life for this world is the best life for the next world also. How different Carlyle! The void in that wild longing heart, no *conditioned*, no mere temporality, how wide and splendid soever, could for a moment fill. No; his eyes are Godwards, and his soul athirst for the ampler ether of the other side

But we must hasten to make an end. In conclusion, then, we may say of Macaulay that be his shortcomings what they may, he has completely realized his own ideal. He says himself: "The diligence, the accuracy, and the judgment of Hallam, united to the vivacity and the colouring of Southey—a History of England written throughout in this manner would be the most fascinating book in the language: it would be more in request at the circulating libraries than the last novel." This was written in 1835, and accuratély foretold the fortune of his own History twenty years later. Yes; Macaulay eminently possessed—and again we use his own words—"the art of writing what people will like to read; he rejects all but the attractive parts of

his subject; he keeps only what is in itself amusing, or what can be made so by the artifice of his diction." He cannot originate, he cannot create, but he disposes admirably, and has a marvellous power of what the French call the *mise en scène.* In subtlety, depth, fertility, in spontaneity of thought, he is infinitely behind his own great prototype Hume. To the solidity, the comprehensiveness, the completeness, the immensity of range of Gibbon, he can have no pretension. To the earnestness, the intensity, the *vision* of Carlyle, he is equally a stranger. With men like these he is simply incommensurable. His place is not among the kings; he holds no throne; he sits not by the sides of Thucydides and Tacitus. In the annals of the world we know but one mate for him—a mate that he would disdain, perhaps, but a mate that if here inferior is there superior; —this mate is Sallust.

DE QUINCEY AND COLERIDGE UPON KANT.

In the remarks of these two English writers on the German philosophers, especially Kant, there lies the possibility of certain lights, not unillustrative as well of the one side as of the other, and not unlikely, perhaps, to be of interest to the general reader. It is this reader's ear we would win, then, on this subject, for a few pages.

From De Quincey we quote at once as follows:—

"Kant is a dubious exception. . . . Within his own circle none durst tread but he. But that circle was limited. He was called by one who weighed him well, the *Alles-zermalmender*, the world shattering Kant. He could destroy; his intellect was essentially destructive. He had no instincts of creation or restoration within his Apollyon mind . . . [he] exulted in the pro-

spect of absolute and ultimate annihilation. . . . The King of Prussia [was] obliged to level his state thunders, and terrify him in his advance, else I am persuaded that Kant would have formally delivered atheism from the professor's chair." [1]

Now, on matters German, De Quincey is usually admitted to be a master, and it is hardly indirectly that he himself claims as much; nevertheless, there is not one of these words that deserves not to be negatived. Really, throughout his whole life, the thoughts that lay nearest to Kant were God, Immortality, and Free-will. These to him (*with* Ontology, but only as forecourt) constituted Metaphysic; and to re-establish metaphysic was his single aim. To talk of Kant exulting in the prospect of annihilation, "absolute and ultimate annihilation," is even less relevant than to talk of Galileo rejoicing in the unmoved centrality of the earth; while there are few names in our mouths the addition to which of "Atheist" were a greater blasphemy. We must look closer, however, at the circumstances of the charge.

There is only a single characteristic in Kant

[1] De Quincey's Works, Hogg's edition, vol. ii. pp. 162, 163.

which, on the religious side, has been made a handle of attack; and that is the undoubted supremacy which he awards to morality. Hence probably the imputation of Pelagianism, as likewise, later, that of Rationalism. Morality with Kant, however, has a width of meaning that is quite peculiar to himself To him it means that single principle which realized, as alluded to already, the interests of metaphysic. Nay, it was morality—the world of *practice* - that explained to him the *lacunæ* in these respects in the world of *theory* (knowledge), and exhibited these *lacunæ* themselves as a provision of the most indispens able purpose. It is no wonder then, that Kant valued or *over*valued morality.

As for Pelagianism, Rationalism, etc., they concern Theology, and shall be left aside. We may remark only that we have not yet found anywhere in Kant a single word that tends not to re-establish religion, and knit us closer to Christianity. From the very surface of his writings, indeed, Kant is seen to form even a contrast to the Voltaires, and others the like, with whom such information as De Quincey's would rashly class him. Kant is no mocker, no Frenchman of the eighteenth century, with a blind pre-

judice against the religion which he has seen—and because he has so seen it—outraged around him. Kant was piously brought up both by parents and instructors, and religion, with all that concerned religion, remained to him through life the central interest; nor was it aught but venom and vulgarity that brought the charge of heresy against him.

As regards the allusion to the King of Prussia, we may say, indeed, that either Schubert's account of the transaction, or that of Rosenkranz, as contained in their united edition of the works of Kant, or Kant's own (in his preface to the *Streit der Facultäten*), will alone suffice to demonstrate at once the absurdity of De Quincey's misrepresentation. This is, indeed, to give a strange validity to the miserable industry of Hilmer, Hermes, Waltersdorf, and company. This is strangely to invert the true character of that contemptible attack on the aged Kant in 1794, on which an indignant Germany has ever since called shame. We are not required to say more here. Kant's own letter to the King is at once a triumphant defence and an overwhelming rebuke. And while Rosenkranz, as regards this matter, and in reference to Christianity, directly styles

Kant "the Restorer of Faith," Schubert,* in the same connexion, writes thus:—

"Kant's candid inquiries and pure intentions were clouded, perverted, disgraced; and the noblest and surest friend of existing monarchical institutions, the veritable reverer of the Christian religion and its blessed influence on the elevation of the people and moral ennoblement . . . was accused as a scorner of Christianity and an enemy of the people's welfare."

De Quincey had ample means of information within his power, and it is quite impossible to account for his travesty of this Hilmer and Hermes affair into a compulsory resort to his bolts on the part of the Prussian Jupiter against the attacks of an atheistic Apollyon. To compare these several allegations, indeed, with the reputation and pretensions of De Quincey is to set ourselves adrift on a sea of speculation where there are many feelings besides satisfaction and repose.

But, as intimated, there is more to strike us still than these curiously absurd imputations about annihilation and atheism; for, briefly to say it, there is not one word in the whole quotation but jingles false. But, first of all, here is

another little quotation with which we shall begin what we have further to say:—"So far from seeing too dimly, as in the case of perplexed obscurity, their defect is the very reverse; they see too clearly, and fancy that others see as clearly as themselves. Such, without any tincture of confusion, was the obscurity of Kant." Further on, too, De Quincey (*Works*, vol. iv. pp. 182, 183) talks of the same as an "elliptical obscurity," links in a chain of thought being omitted.

Style, as we know, is one of De Quincey's familiars; he is not only an admirable stylist himself, but he is also an admirable judge of style. Knowing Kant, then, he must be correct as to Kant's obscurity. Now Kant *is* obscure—even Hegel says so, and he of all men is the best qualified to judge; but Hegel's theory of Kant's obscurity is very unlike De Quincey's. Hegel, in fact, explains it by the words, "Zum Ueberfluss des Beweisens kommt noch der Ueberfluss der Sprache," or, indeed, by the single word "Geschwätzigkeit." Nay, in regard to expressions of Kant, Hegel (*Logik*, i. p. 84; the other, p. 220) may be found using such words as "verworrene Schwerfälligkeit." And this is the truth. Kant's obscurity, so far from being produced by "fancy-

ing that others saw as clearly as himself," arose, on the contrary, simply from fearing that he should never get others to see at all. Kant's obscurity, so far from "being free from confusion," is full of it—full to "perplexed clumsiness." Kant's obscurity, finally, so far from being "elliptical," is tautological, is produced not only by "superfluity of proving," but by "superfluity of speech," by mere "loquacity," endless iteration. Would the reader have an example, let him turn to the *Kritik of Pure Reason*, and endeavour to read there the second "analogy of experience." What is discussed in it is Causality, the germ, the *fons et origo*, the creative *eye*, the key to Kant's entire system. The needs, then, in such a case, are distinctness, clearness, conviction, certainty; but what we have instead can be termed only a tautological obscurity, perplexed not only to confusion, but even to despair. Kant here can never persuade himself that he has yet stated the case so that a reader *must* understand it; arrived at the end, he returns ever to the beginning again; in perpetual doubt, he repeats a thousand times; and the ultimate effect on the reader is to produce the belief that all this straining and striving on the

part of Kant arises not so much from his inability to set his principle in its true light, as from the inadequacy of the principle itself to the light in which he would set it. Here, in short, what to De Quincey is present is really absent, what absent really present; and this brilliant writer is "contradictorily and even curiously" in error. The irrelevancy that loomed through De Quincey's absurd and impossible charges of atheism, repeats and confirms itself, then, as regards such a palpable matter as style,—where, too, the critic himself is eminently a master and judge.

But, returning to the first quotation, we perceive the teaching of Kant further characterized by De Quincey as only of a negative or destructive nature. "His intellect was essentially destructive," he says; then he talks of "his Apollyon mind," and, of course, he could not miss that everlasting but much misunderstood "Alles-zermalmender." All this again, however, is just the reverse of the truth. The destructive or negative side of Kant's intellect was very subordinate to the constructive and affirmative. Construction, indeed, was his special industry; and, if he possessed any instincts at all, these were they which De Quincey directly denies him—instincts, namely, of "resto-

ration and creation." What can be at all named the negative or destructive side of Kant's industry confines itself almost exclusively to the *Dialectic* of his *first* Kritik. But even there his object, in the end, is not by any means to destroy, but simply to prepare for building—simply to prepare for "restoration and creation." He desires, indeed, to point out what, on certain subjects, speculative reason is qualified to say, and what, on the same subjects, it is not qualified to say; and he hopes that, while he will be thus able, on the one hand, to put a stop for ever to the scandalous *rixæ* of philosophers, he will be able also, on the other hand, to lead us to the only true and valid arguments which can have place in the sphere in question. This is his simple object; and this he conceives himself to have accomplished; and the word "destructive," as applied to that object, would not only have surprised and vexed him, but it is a word totally beside the point which he regarded.

The source of such mistakes as convey themselves by this word "destructive" of De Quincey, or the phrase of others, that Kant left reason "a faculty of lies," is to be found probably in this, that it is only the latter part of the Dialectic of

the first Kritik which, as more easily written, has been generally read. Thus it becomes intelligible how students, who understood what they read in isolation only and not in connexion, were tempted to fly to the unwarrantable conclusion that, because Kant here opposed some of the usual arguments bearing on the existence of God, he sought to discredit this doctrine itself. The reverse was the truth, and Kant here had no object in the end that was not affirmative.

But leaving this, it is certain that, apart from this single *Dialectic*, all else in Kant is creative and restorative. In the *Æsthetik* and *Analytik* of his first Kritik, for example, he creates afresh *ontology*, while his second Kritik, together with the latter part of the third Kritik and this very Dialectic of which we have just spoken, restores metaphysic, or, to Kant's belief, establishes the existence of God, the freedom of the will, and the immortality of the soul. In the third Kritik, further, if there be a certain negative as regards *design*, this negative is again owing to motives sincerely affirmative, and there is much in the criticism that is both penetrating and satisfactory. Moreover, also, it is in this Kritik that we have affirmatively enunciated, and for the

first time, perhaps, *principles* of the sublime and beautiful, accompanied by surprisingly original and suggestive characterizations of genius and of what concerns the liberal arts. We are not limited to the three Kritiken either, but may refer to his numerous affirmative contributions, as to psychology in his Anthropology, to logic in his treatise of that name and elsewhere, and to the principles of politics in various of his minor works. The whole works of Kant, indeed, are such as readily to enable any one conclusively to demonstrate the injustice of applying the epithet "destructive" to such an opulent and affirmative soul; and De Quincey, in the allegations which he has permitted himself, has only perpetrated a crime--a crime not only to Kant and history, but a crime to himself.

To be told so pointedly, too, that Kant's circle was "limited" *grates*; for the vast comprehensiveness of the man lies in the very titles of his books, and we know that, of all modern philosophers, he was the first to exhibit to us the example both of a character and a system that, to speak like Emerson, "came" (as nearly as possible) "full circle."

Then in this circle "none durst tread but he"

—the Apollyon, the *Alles zermalmender*, the shatterer of the world. This is the central weak point, the special *lunes* of the De Quincey nature. De Quincey here has teased up his imagination into the mighty, the monstrous, the vast, the vague; and so he would similarly infect ours. We must watch the limbs of a giant in the gloom — a giant who was alone in his power, but dangerous, destructive, deadly. We take leave to say, however, that this awful being of the imagination, around whom, at the bidding of De Quincey, we are, as it were, to charge the air with the strange, the mystic, the irresistible—with what we name to ourselves, as in reference to De Quincey and in his own word, the "tumultuosissimento," contrasts but oddly with the plain little Königsberg burgher of truth. Within his own circle none durst tread but he! Why, the fact is, that anybody may enter it and pace about it at his ease, if he will but faithfully apply what ordinary faculties have been refused to no one. Kant has certainly left behind him the greatest philosophical structure that any man since Aristotle, and before Hegel, had been privileged to raise. Still there is nothing supernatural or superhuman in the mental powers by which this was accomplished.

Philosophically, Kant is fertile, rich, original, as well in depth as in comprehensiveness, to a degree that surprises: he was the first, as it were, that entered the very temple of metaphysic, and made its whole space his. Still his secret to all this was patient and tenacious thought. A clue was given by Hume, and his merit was to follow it unweariedly till the whole treasures to which it led lay at his feet. True; original power of faculty was required for this, and such was present from the first; but in this faculty there was nothing of the amorphous, nothing of the incomprehensible, nothing of the hopelessly transcendent, nothing of that which the words of De Quincey would picture. There is nothing of all this, indeed, whether in the thoughts, or in the words, or in the demeanour of the plain, simple, discreet, of the eminently well-meaning, but somewhat old-maidenish and loquacious, Herr Professor Kant. Kant, indeed, is a lesson of *plainness* to De Quincey. Take up the first volume of the latter's works, and read the autobiographic sketches. It is impossible to proceed far before —always, too, in a certain dissatisfaction with the business *spinning* and the common literary expedients in support—one says to one's-self: How

much dandyism there is in all this, and surely De Quincey might have received the lash of Thackeray, yet kissed the rod! The eternal ascription of wealth and importance to everything that belonged to him; the perpetual weary gossip about lords, lords, and ladies, ladies, his dressing-room and his hurrying to his toilette; the uxoriousness of Lord This, not vulgar, but noiseless, and unobtrusive; the sweet Irish style of innocent gaiety of Lady That; the immense rents of the various houses he lived in; the trouble he had with the hard-mouthed horses at Lord So-and-so's; the heavy golden perquisite he gave the groom; his longing for four horses, not for splendour—oh no! they used to drive six and eight horses in Wales; the intense commerce he had had with men of every rank, from the highest to the lowest: such things, surely, can warrant no other conclusion. Then we have his want of appetite for the "mechanic understanding," and his necessity for stimulants in the shape of mysteries. Coleridge's mind demanded mysteries, it appears, and so does his; and we see him, resolute, so far as wishes go, to rise to some great monumental work, something that concealed a most profound meaning—a meaning of prodigious compass.

Thus perpetually is he lashing himself into the grandiose, the "tumultuosissimento," some dream "tumultuous and changing as a musical fugue," "where he was stared at, hooted at, grinned at, chattered at, by monkeys, by paroquets, by cockatoos," etc.

These last words will recall, perhaps, one of the finest passages of the *Confessions*, of which not to admire the writing *as* writing would amount to *felo-de-se;* but after all, is there anything in it, is it more than empty form, can it boast a particle of matter, is there burden of thought in it, and is not the very trick of it soon learned? Interesting it is certainly, and from an inferior artist we should receive it without a murmur. But De Quincey was in himself no inferior artist. De Quincey brought a rich original endowment, as Burns says, "direct from Almighty God." Not only did he possess an imagination of marvellous opulence—not only was a susceptivity his, rare, discriminating, universal, and of the most delicate touch—not only could he give expression to such faculties by a style elastic, living, inexhaustible, that penetrated with ease into every nook, nor ever turned baffled away—not only this, but he added further a most excellent understanding,

clear, sound, vigorous : and by this addition he stood forth a man fit formally to cope with the very highest problems that any philosophy has yet proposed. In a certain sort, indeed, De Quincey came from the bosom of his mother, perhaps a swifter, perhaps a richer spirit, it may be than even Kant Yet compare the work they did. That is the truth of De Quincey ; he fell a martyr to the tone of the day—a tone that sounded only genius, genius ; let us have flights, let us have the unexampled, the inconceivable, the unutterably original. To have the credit of being *up* in German Metaphysicians, Latin Schoolmen, Thaumaturgic Platonists, Religious Mystics, etc., this too lay in the order of the day. But to be *up* in such things meant only to be able to read *in* them, and so, from time to time, take inspiration from them. Fairly to apprehend, masticate, absorb, assimilate them—them and their historical connexion--that was not the business of the creative genius, but only of the plodder. Accordingly, as we have just seen in De Quincey's case, to be up in Kant was simply to know him not, but to be guilty of monstrous injustice to the name and fame of one of the purest and greatest *workers* whom history records. Truly it was a vast

mistake: the early years of the present century sparkled in England, as with the splendours and gaieties of a feast, so many men of surpassing genius talked and wrote and sang in them. But anything worthy of the name of study or of work had been accepted by the fewest. Not ill-read in classics certainly, the most of them left college with but a formal varnish of the other disciplines; and—save some desultory reading—as they left, they for the most part remained. Nor with all his genius, with all his talent, with all his unquestionable learning, can De Quincey, on the whole, be considered an exception. It is this which, in his respect, we have sought to illustrate in canvassing his relation to Kant, in regard to whom his mistakes also, we hope, have not unprofitably been signalized.

One other notice ("The Last Days") of Kant there occurs in De Quincey's works, but, as only a repetition of Wasianski's painful and unnecessary diary of a case of senile marasmus in the person of Kant, it shall not concern us here. De Quincey speaks also of Schelling, of the Transcendental Idealism, but his description of this book looks as if it were not from knowledge, though in such terms as to imply knowledge,—the basis all the time being simply conjecture.

We shall now turn to Coleridge in similar reference; and shall begin, as after the preceding is but natural, with the peculiarity of his character, in subjection also, like that of De Quincey, to the influences of the time. Here, as there, our tone shall be that of one who loves: we shall no longer see, we hope, however, the divine *nimbus* alone, but something, too, of the man within. We shall remain still, nevertheless, not fuller of frankness than free from grudge. As we have not reviled De Quincey, so neither shall we revile Coleridge. The best of this fine poet and critic of poets we carry by heart, and have so carried it through life; and we shall not willingly yield to any one in intensity of appreciation for the minutest beauty, or in enthusiasm of admiration for genius, and music, and imaginative splendour.

Probably Coleridge was right when, as will be found in certain autobiographical notices at the end of the second volume of the second edition of his *Biographia Literaria*, he talks of his "ebullient brain" in boyhood; and intimates that at that period "no poor fellow's idea-pot ever so bubbled up" as his own. It will not be easy to conceive, either, any more accurate description of his own young literary self than that contained

in these words from page 320 of the same volume: —"Sensibility, imagination, vanity, sloth, and feelings of deep and bitter contempt for almost all who traversed the orbit of my understanding, were even then prominent and manifest." What is thus indicated is by no means an individual phenomenon, however, but a constitution of consciousness that may be predicated of many—that may be predicated, for example, not of one, nor of several, but probably of all those men who, from Byron to Alexander Smith, from Hazlitt to Gilfillan, from Mat Lewis to Thackeray, from Burns to Tennyson, from De Quincey to Carlyle, have been regarded as possessed, whether for potence or for impotence, of the temperament of genius. For it by no means follows that power or strength is convertible with genius: the probability, indeed, is, that for one seed of genius that struggles to the tree, nine hundred and ninety-nine die at various stages of imbecility and misery. But, however this be, Coleridge's words apply, even in view of the names recited, to no one more accurately than to himself. He had an "ebullient brain;" his "idea-pot" was as a seething caldron. A greedy reader, he was deep in metaphysic and theology before fifteen. The

hymns of the mystic Synesius were at his fingers' ends; Catullus and Terence and Lucretius lay under his pillow; and, disdaining the games of the open, he walked the academic corridors, reciting passages, applauding, blaming, suggesting,—his cheeks glowing, his head smoking, and his heart aflame. He knew nothing of the ways of life, nothing of the world, nothing of the men in it,—all these were on the outside to him, beings of another class, inferiors to his imagination, before whom he yet cowered as superiors in fact. In the so great love that developed itself within him for poets and philosophers, in the splendid images and big thoughts they woke in him, in the wild enthusiasm with which he pleaded for them, in the scorn and hatred that inflamed or gnawed him towards those who denied them,—in all this he felt earnest that he was of kindred nature, predestinate to Apolloship, the godship of prophecy, the godship of song. Then followed purposeless wanderings, aimless aberrations—as of one, indeed, aimlessly drunken of his own good fortune, and that dallied aimlessly with the very privilege he hugged.

But now love came, and, for the time, he was rescued. Once again the earth was golden and

the air was joy; he had found his Sara. "In awe before the innocent sweet wisdom, the prescient purity, his heart grew deep. They need not fear for bread, he thought: it was his Father's world, and they could not want. He had wealth within him—opulence. The world was open to him; literature was open to him; he would spring into the saddle and spur before the rest. So he married, and began the *Watchman*. Of the happiness of love we will believe that he tasted deeply, as of the happiness of work; but not for long. Too soon the *Watchman* is of avail but as fuel in the grate; too soon has marriage taught him, as he says himself, "the wonderful uses of that vulgar commodity yclept bread;" too soon we find allusions in him to his wife's groans, and their thin faces, and his distress to write for bread. Alas, the *ways of life!* The dædal wings have snapped, then; and, with a shock, he has come to earth. When he looks up again, it is to him, we fancy, as if some one had snuffed the lights out, and he sees the shabby actors, and the rough wood, and the coarse canvas. It is, indeed, by no means pleasant to have to see the *Watchman* go up in that way; while, as for his wife's thin checks and her groans that call to him for bread, that is in-

supportable. A certain wild honey that will not feed the body,—this is all he has gathered ; bread he has none. An inner life is his one necessity; but, in so uneasy an externality, of which he is himself the powerless and apprehensive centre, an inner life he cannot have—an inner life it is maddening even to try to have. He cannot help reverting to the time when he was alone, and free from responsibility. He doubts his fitness for domestic life, and fain would make it credible to himself that poetry cannot consort with prose. On the other side, again, he cannot hide from himself the advantages of well-sized rooms, and commodious furniture, and delicate dinners, and the talk mostly to himself, with freedom from care. If then, now, he seek to relieve the domestic burden by a visit to his friends, we cannot wonder; while we must sympathize with his resolution that there, in that leisure, he will write, he will work, he will do the best for his family, he will create philosophies, dash down poems that—that—etc.

But, even in this element, the good was not at once realized. It was so pleasant to read, and dream, and wander, and talk, and be listened to. Work was irksome, he found. These fine things

that he would condescend to do, and that certainly everybody expected of him, would not, unfortunately, allow themselves to be done at a wish. If philosophies were to be made, philosophies were to be learned; and that was labour. These German fellows, at all events, of whom he spoke so much, were strangely intolerant of being *read in.* One could read in Plato and Bacon, and all the rest of them; and one could quote passages from them that spoke for themselves. But was the one or the other possible with the Germans? One might, indeed, quote from Kant, as others did, the moral world within and the starry heavens without; but was there any possibility of a single other quotation? It was disagreeable; people looked up to him so; he had spoken so divinely, he had promised so much; it seemed there was an element of expectation round him; he felt goaded, goaded, for ever goaded. A panoramic imagination and an easy stomach; if he was to work, he must have the latter: if he was ever to evolve the marvels of which his words had given the foretaste, he must have the former; but opium gave both. And so procrastination increased, and as he could not vacate the tripod, and as with time intensity of expectation grew, there

needs must come excuses, and pretexts, and subterfuges, and plausible *propos* to every man. Or, by fits, answering desperately to the goad, he wrote blindly, but authoritatively, of Hobbes and Descartes, and vilipended Hume, and quoted Plato and Plotinus, Salvator Rosa and Grynæus, and appropriated the erudition of Maass, and plagiarized from Schelling, and maundered about Kant—losing daily more and more of that which is the soul and centre of humanity, conscience, and the moral law.

It is here now that we take up Coleridge, with the view of eliciting lights that, in relation to the Germans, may prove illustrative as well of them as of him; and painful, harsh, as this general picture may be, we hope to adduce matter that shall abundantly substantiate it. Of such matter, indeed, a large store has been already laid before the public. Sir James Mackintosh, Professor Ferrier, and Coleridge's own editor and nephew, Henry Nelson Coleridge (whose candour at once and research in these respects are alike admirable), have amply accomplished this as regards Hobbes, Descartes, Hume, Maass, and Schelling. De Quincey, too, so far as concerns Schelling and Coleridge's intromissions with him, declares that

"the entire essay (in the *Biographia Litteraria*), from the first word to the last, is a *verbatim* translation from Schelling." The paper of Professor Ferrier in particular (see *Blackwood's Magazine* for March 1840) is a formal proof of this; and we quite sympathize with this accomplished and earnest student, when, with reference to Coleridge's cheerful, or even benignant, admissions of "genial coincidences" between himself and Schelling, he exclaims:—"Genial coincidences, forsooth! where every one word of the one author tallies with every one word of the other!" We do not intend to re-tread, however, all the ground which has been already so well trodden by these eminent men in advance. Still, in the prosecution of our own immediate theme (Kant), we shall touch on several points that may prove, perhaps, supplementary to what has been said, not of Maass and others before him, but of Schelling.

In chapter IX. of the *Biographia Literaria*, we find these:—

"While I in part translate the following observations from a contemporary writer of the Continent, let me be permitted to premise, that I might have transcribed the substance from *memoranda* of my own, which were written many years

before his pamphlet was given to the world; and that I prefer another's words to my own, partly as a tribute due to priority of publication, but still more from the pleasure of sympathy in a case where *coincidence* only was possible. . . . In Schelling's *Natur-Philosophie*, and the *System des Transcendentalen Idealismus*, I first found a genial coincidence with much that I had toiled out for myself, and a powerful assistance in what I had yet to do."

One is apt to suppose that there is a tacit reference to Kant here, and that his was the quarry from which Coleridge must have "toiled out" that—whatever it was—of which he speaks. In the same chapter, indeed, he acknowledges himself to be indebted to the "writings of the illustrious sage of Konigsberg, more than to any other work," for the invigoration and discipline of his understanding; he boasts (and 1815 is the date) of "fifteen years' familiarity with them;" and he alleges, in explanation of his coincidences with Schelling, that they had both "studied in the same school, and been disciplined by the same preparatory philosophy, namely, the writings of Kant." But if Coleridge admit, in Kant's regard, a like debt with Schelling, it is not so certain

that he was fully awake to the truth in either case. We suspect that he did not understand the exact nature of Schelling's obligation to Kant; and that, like most of his countrymen probably, he supposed Schelling to be a great *original* writer, who, of course, read *in* Kant, as in others, but, on the whole, owed his triumph to his own "magical brain." The strict historical connexion of the German philosophers was not then well understood in England, and such suppositions were, at least on the part of non-experts, very excusable. Coleridge, then (whether, as a professed expert, excusable or not), will not, as seems likely, by any means, foolishly allow himself to be any deeper in Kant's debt than he fancies Schelling will. "Yet there had dawned upon me," he cries, "even before I had met with the Critique of the Pure Reason, a certain guiding light;" and he lets us know that there were others besides Kant to whom he and Schelling owed inspiration. "Both had equal obligations," he asserts, "to the polar logic and dynamic philosophy of Giordano Bruno;" and then, as regards Behmen (Böhme), while Schelling knows him only recently, coincides with him only incidentally, and can extend to him "only feelings of sympathy," he (Coleridge)

reverences him from "a much earlier period," "owes him a debt of gratitude," and has to thank him for "obligations more direct." Coleridge will not attribute to Kant all the glory, then, whether in his own case or in that of Schelling. They had both Bruno, he says; they had both Behmen. Still we may take it for granted that he would have allowed the *greater part* of the glory to have been the due of Kant.

Now, then, returning to our extract, we find the case to stand thus:—Coleridge claims to have virtually preceded and anticipated Schelling through a like knowledge with this latter of Kant, Böhme, and Bruno. Nay, we are given to understand that this is not wonderful, inasmuch as Coleridge, in some respects, had even the advantage of Schelling. This was particularly the case as regards Böhme, and as regards "a certain guiding light." What concerns Böhme may be passed, there is so much else to occupy us. The reader, we daresay, has a very good guess already as to what knowledge of Böhme the works of Coleridge will show, and what those of Schelling; as well as to how it stands with the age, directness, and amount of it in the case of either. As for the "guiding light," in the possession of that

light—if it led Coleridge to the results of Schelling in independence of Kant—we may allow him to have been singularly fortunate. Nevertheless, we are disposed to believe that, had he known how the matter really stood with what we call "the strict historical connexion," Bruno and Böhme, indeed (though not as co-factors in the same breath with Kant) might have been *mentioned*, but not the "light." A "guiding light" *to* Kant and *beyond* Kant, *before* Kant—that were truly a wonder of wonders!

Coleridge's anticipation of Schelling, now, is contained, it seems, in certain "Memoranda;" and these were written, we are told, "many years before Schelling's pamphlet (a word which runs lighter than 'book') was given to the world." Again, further, the particular "pamphlets," of which, in the case of Schelling, Coleridge avows knowledge, are the *Natur-Philosophie*, and the *System des Transcendentalen Idealismus.* It is the matter of these, then, that Coleridge shall have anticipated. Now, the comparison of a few historical dates will put these things in very curious lights.

Coleridge returned from Germany in 1800, where he had resided during fourteen months:

and, as was natural to suppose, it is to this date (of 1800) that, in the *Biographia Literaria*, he refers, as we have seen, the commencement of his knowledge of Kant. Now, the *Natur-Philosophie* was published in 1797, and the *Transcendentalen Idealismus* in 1800. It is evident, then, that Coleridge's "Memoranda," having been written many years before Schelling's "pamphlet was given to the world," must have been written many years also before 1797, many years before Fichte (the *first* sketch of whose system dates only from 1794), many years before he knew Kant, or had even learned German, and, indeed (seeing that he was born in 1772), many years before his twenty-fifth year. If the "light" perplexed, these "Memoranda" confound. Written as alleged, their contents are to be supposed accurately represented by this *verbatim* translation from Schelling! Let us assume a mistake in the date, however; let us assume the "many years" not to have existed; and the "Memoranda" to have been written *after* a knowledge of Kant. In that case it must be granted that, between 1800 and 1815, Coleridge had time enough to "toil out" for himself, from Kant, such doctrines as those of Schelling's, and before any actual acquaintance with Schelling,

if it were from Kant, directly from Kant and before any actual acquaintance with Schelling, that such doctrines were to be at all toiled out. But every one in the least acquainted with German philosophy, and its rigid historical sequence, must smile somewhat curiously at the pretensions of any one, even a German, to the evolution of a system from Kant, identical with that of Schelling, without the intervention of the link of Fichte. From Kant to Schelling, Fichte, in fact, is the indispensable bridge. Coleridge, if he evolved Schelling, must, at least, have previously *known* Fichte. But Coleridge did not know Fichte. His notice of Fichte in this celebrated chapter (ix.) is but a word, and representative of little or nothing; while the burlesque is simply childish, and points to an astounded gaping at the outside of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, as its only possible source. Or if Coleridge *evolved* Fichte, where is that evolution represented in his works? Nay, where in his works is that "much that he had toiled out for himself?" where is that which, by Schelling's "powerful assistance," he afterwards did? where is this accomplishment that is like Schelling, and beyond Schelling, to be found represented? Why, nowhere—unless in that

astonishing, claimed and unclaimed, attributed and unattributed, piece of transcendental idealism, in reference to which bewilderment reaches its climax, when we read, "'To remain unintelligible to such a mind,' exclaims Schelling, on a like occasion," and know that *this* is the occasion, and that Coleridge is simply literally translating, even in his notes (as in that one about Leibnitz and Hemsterhuis), *from* Schelling! When he says, then, that he "might have transcribed 'his Schellingianism' from *memoranda* of his own that were written many years before Schelling's *pamphlet* was given to the world," is he not also saying something so delightfully impossible that it is impossible not to smile? But when, further, we see the bland Coleridge politely bowing, and chivalrously waiving the *pas* to Schelling, as preferring "another's words to his own," "as a tribute due to priority of publication," but "still more from the pleasure of sympathy in a case where *coincidence* only was possible," is it possible to do aught else—in presence of so comical an example of the pure ludicrous—than convert the smile into a downright laugh?

But if Coleridge evolved Schelling without knowing Schelling, he must have evolved him

also, not only without knowing Fichte, but without—or rather, let us say, only *with* such knowledge of Kant as gave rise to very strange results; for, however curious be the "light that dawned on him" *before*, scarcely less curious must we pronounce the light that dawned on him *after*, he knew Kant. To illustrate and make good this allegation, we cannot altogether avoid quotations; but, as we shall compress and reduce them to their least, it would be very desirable that the reader kept the original by him. In chapter ix. Coleridge refers to Kant thus:—

"The originality, the depth, and the compression of the thoughts; the novelty and subtlety yet solidity and importance of the distinctions; the adamantine chain of the logic; and, I will venture to add (paradox as it will appear to those who have taken their notion of Immanuel Kant from reviewers and Frenchmen), the clearness and evidence of the Critique of the Pure Reason, etc. . . . took possession of me as with a giant's hand. After fifteen years' familiarity with them, I still read these, and all his other productions, with undiminished delight and increasing admiration. The few passages that remained obscure to me, after due effort of thought (as the chapter on

original apperception), and the apparent contradictions which occur, I soon found were hints and insinuations referring to ideas which Kant either did not think it prudent to avow, or, etc. . . . He had been in imminent danger of persecution. . . . The expulsion of [Fichte] . . . from the University of Jena supplied experimental proof that the venerable old man's caution was not groundless. In spite, therefore, of his own declarations, I could never believe that it was possible for him to have meant no more by his Noumenon, or Thing in itself, than his mere words express; or that, in his own conception, he confined the whole *plastic* power to the forms of the intellect, leaving for the external cause, for the materiale of our sensations, a matter without form, which is, doubtless, inconceivable. I entertained doubts, likewise, whether, in his own mind, he even laid *all* the stress which he appears to do on the moral postulates. . . . Φώνησε συνετοῖσιν: and for those who could not pierce through the symbolic husk, his writings were not intended. Questions which cannot be fully answered without exposing the respondent to personal danger," etc.

This passage, while it proves Coleridge to have seriously occupied himself with the great work of

Kant as far as the deduction of the categories, proves him also, however strenuous and persevering his endeavours, to have, in general result, failed. That ease in "the" pure reason to which he pretends, he did not attain. For, in the first place, the ascription to Kant of designful reticence and intentional obscurity is not only unfounded and gratuitous, but its reverse is the truth. Kant's great works are free from any reticence, and as for intentional obscurity, anything wider of the truth it were impossible to *invent.* Kant *is*—but never intentionally—obscure; only from excess of *intention* to be *not* obscure is it that, in effect, he becomes obscure. This Kant knew and lamented; and so it is that he is never done with cries to the excellent "styles" of such men as Reinhold and Fichte to come to his rescue. "Hints and insinuations," then, are quite beside Kant; and, of all works, precisely his contain the least of "symbolic husk." A literal conveyance of his thought, for this he strains; but he never calls on imagination for one that shall be figurative or symbolical. Of the obscurity, a peculiar terminology is certainly one element; but the others, as said, are only diffuseness, prolixity, and repetition (see Hegel

again here in his *Hist. of Phil.*, vol. iii. p. 503). Then the reason alleged, caution in consequence of persecution, is but an anachronism. That poor affair of Hilmer and Hermes in 1794 (still less Fichte's mishap in 1799) could have no influence on events of 1781, of 1788, or even of 1790. Kant, then, far from being anxious to conceal his thought, was, on the contrary, *over*-anxious to express it, and even sensitive to a fault at failure. Before printing, he does not seem to have practised the usual reticence in conversation even; his friend Hippel could, from that source, and in priority to himself, publish some of his most original ideas. Kant, in brief, is the most ingenuous, candid, and loyal of mankind; and Coleridge's long and somewhat equivocal defence of concealment (see his book further) could not possibly have been more misplaced.

In the second place, in his misinterpretation of the obscurities which he himself assigns, lies the proof of Coleridge's failure to understand that single theory of perception which, we may say, is their sole burden. Of the various materials in this theory—noumenon, sensation, intuition, notion of understanding, act of judgment, idea of reason—and of the various syntheses of these, in

imagination, in "original apperception," etc., we readily grant the difficulty; but this difficulty Coleridge has not overcome. On the contrary, all these things, which are as windmills of fact, he has only Quixotically converted into giants of dream. This is seen in the very expedient by which he has resolved the obscurity and reticence in question: in superfœtating, that is, these by a fantastic brood of his own, he has, at best, only complimented his imagination at the expense of his understanding. Thus the *noumenon*—which, as but external antecedent known only in its subjective effects, lays Kant under the most significant restrictions, not only in reference to *knowledge*, but in reference to *design* and *beauty* —must, according to Coleridge, be to Kant, let him say what he may, the same cunning and unnameable sphinx, or other monster, that it is to himself. Nevertheless, Kant does confine that "plastic power" in the very manner which Coleridge refuses to believe; while, as for "matter without form," it is not easy sufficiently to indicate the constancy and clearness with which Kant urges that objects which are perceived only through a medium of sense can and must have form only from within. As regards *sensation* and *intuition*

(*perception*), on Maass, who is then signalizing the commonest Kantian distinctions here, Coleridge will be found (chap. v.) commenting in such manner as suggests only the blind groping of an unsteady imagination in the dark. These relate, for example, to *matter* (sensation from without) and *form* (perception of time and space from within); now, when Maass remarks that the characters of an object are either individual or common (*i.e.*, either *material* or *formal*), Coleridge appends the comically inapposite comment—"Deceptive; the *mark* (character) in itself is always individual; by an act of the reflex understanding, it may be rendered a sign or general term." In remarking (chap. xii.) that Kant's intuition is used only "for that which can be represented in time and space," he would have insured perfect correctness, had he added the words, *internally as well as externally;* and, in that case, he would have seen that, in *his* sense, Kant does *not* deny "the possibility of intellectual intuitions." On the contrary, it is on these, and in that sense, that the introduction to the first Kritik is largely specially employed. The intellectual intuition which Kant denies to man is that (without medium of sense) which he

ascribes to God; and is not what Coleridge supposes—it is, in fact, the "Anschauender Verstand" of which he never caught a glimpse. When, further, he goes on to prefer to Kant's sense of intuition the ordinary English one, he again speaks, surely, in complete unconsciousness of the corresponding theory. Coleridge's knowledge of the remaining elements of this theory—at least, as represented by his intimations in respect to *apperception*, *imagination*, and the *postulates*—is not unconfirmative of the preceding. *Apperception* is spoken of in the extract as—that which it pretty well is—the obscurity special; but however absurd it be to attribute it to reticence, to intention, it is infinitely more absurd to *imagine* it into *dream*. In chap. xii. Coleridge speaks of it thus:—

"Here, then, we have by anticipation the distinction between the conditional finite I (which, as known in distinct consciousness by occasion of experience, is called by Kant's followers the empirical I) and the absolute I Am, and likewise the dependence, or rather the inherence of the former in the latter; in whom we live and move," etc.

Kant's "empirical I" is the ego as manifested

under affection, while his absolute "I Am" is the pure formal I, or, as he calls it also, the bare "I think,"—that is, the simple reflection I, which, to make them *ours*, "must accompany all our other ideas, is in every experience of consciousness one and the same, and can be itself accompanied by none beyond." It will perhaps be admitted, then, that this Orientalizing or Judaizing of the simple identity of every one—this hypostasizing of a thought common to all of us indiscriminately, into the awful I Am, is the most extraordinary apotheosis on record. That Coleridge should have converted the obscurity of some half-dozen paragraphs on a point of ordinary psychology into this! No wonder that he conceived Kant, in such a ticklish position, reticent. Indeed, the due reticence might have been fortunate for himself here. On *imagination* we have this :—

"The imagination, then, I consider either as primary or secondary. The primary imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I Am."

There are those, doubtless, who, in this passage, and others such, have seen only the original and

profound depth of Coleridge's own philosophy. There underlies all these wonders, however, nothing but Kant's simple distinction of imagination into *productive* and *reproductive*, and the association of the former with *original apperception*—affairs all of only human quality. A small matter, then, may give birth to the most marvellous spectra in the brain of Coleridge; of which spectra, however, the true names are but distortion and caricature. The *ideas of reason*, lastly, fall, for one part, into the *moral postulates*; and in these Kant shall be to Coleridge insincere! On these, as on a rock, Kant, however, found himself just rescued from a ravening ocean all around; though, too, he thankfully acknowledged (in *design*) a distant gleam of firm land elsewhere. In these dreamy misapprehensions, then, and strange misinterpretations, we may well admire the relation of Coleridge to Kant.

In the third place, the terms with which the extract opens, in regard to the merits of Kant and his works, are not always such aswe would expect from an expert. "Compression," as we have seen, even though applied to the thoughts, is a word inapposite. Then, in spite of compression, it is not difficulty that Coleridge finds, but, on

the contrary, "clearness and evidence." Hegel, for his part, found the study of Kant "difficult" and "hard;" and humanity in general have called him "dark." But Coleridge's own subsequent words cohere but ill with the general statement. After fifteen years' familiarity with the works of Kant, he still reads them, and with increasing admiration. This is not much: still it is to be said that he who has once mastered such writers as Newton, and La Place, and Aristotle, and Kant, does not usually return to read *in* them, and with increasing admiration, etc. In such cases a return is conditioned by defect of memory, or for the sake of reference. The emotional, the imaginative, the rhetorical, does not exist in Kant; he has no sallies of wit, no novelties of expression, no charm of manner, to attract in his works; and, having once achieved these, his *Principia*, we return as seldom to them as the mathematician to his Euclid. It is very different writers that we read *in*, and with increasing admiration, etc. In such phrases, then, we hold Coleridge to speak, not in intelligence, but in the air; as it were, afloat, too, in a canoe of mere literary balance.

Perhaps we have seen in the preceding, not

only error, but even a certain disingenuousness. This latter *macula,* at least, is visible elsewhere. In chapter x., for example, we find Coleridge saying :—

" The very words *objective* and *subjective,* of such constant recurrence in the schools of yore, I have ventured to re-introduce. . . . I have cautiously discriminated the terms, the reason, and the understanding, encouraged and confirmed by the authority of our genuine divines and philosophers, before the Revolution. . . . This [chap. xii.] distinction between transcendental and transcendent is observed by our elder divines and philosophers, whenever they express themselves scholastically. . . . I shall venture [xii.] to use potence, in order to express a specific degree of a power, in imitation of the algebraists. I have even hazarded the new verb potentiate," etc.

Now, to begin with *transcendent* and *transcendental,* these words involve a distinction so absolutely and exclusively Kant's, that, without appealing to the whole subsequent history of philosophy in Germany, we may at once permit ourselves categorically to contradict the statement of Coleridge. Of *reason* and *understanding,* again, we may speak in precisely the same tone. This

distinction, also, is Kant's, and Kant's alone; in whom, in fact, we are allowed to see the very process of its birth. Authority, then, is here superfluous; but, were it at all wanted, there is Hegel's, and more than once. As for *subjective* and *objective*, Coleridge knows only their current, not their more important moral sense; but they, too, like the others, are not derived from the elder divines, the schools of yore, etc., but straight from the Germans; nor can less be said for the terms *potence* and *potentiate*, which are peculiarly Schelling's. There is a petty moral hebetude involved here, then, to which the excuse of opium, advanced in other cases, will not apply. It is true, Sir William Hamilton similarly sins; but may we not say, in the phrase of this latter, that the attempt implied, whether as concerns knowledge or as concerns ingenuousness, is "an involuntary *felo-de-se*"? It is fairly ludicrous, indeed, to hear Coleridge, in the midst of such labours (Maass and Schelling lying open before him), calling for our indulgence, "while he goes sounding on his dim and perilous way."

The defence of Coleridge here, however natural, is characterized, on the part of his friends, by such naïve *propos* as these:—

"These borrowed plumes dressed him out but poorly; . . . he was generally spoken of . . . as a man of original power, who had spoiled his own genius by devoting himself to the lucubrations of foreigners! . . . There can be no reasonable doubt that he was at least in the same line of thought with him—was in search of what Schelling discovered—before he met with his writings! . . . It would not be difficult to show that Coleridge might have worked out a system not dissimilar to Schelling's in its essential features."

Then we have allusions to his characteristic peculiarities, his "nerveless languor of body and bodily mind," his ignorance of the ways of "the market," and his want of "the mechanic understanding." Now, we must say that, let his peculiarities have been what they may, ignorance of "the market"—want of "the mechanic understanding"—was not among them. Of this—and in its most mechanic and market application to pounds, shillings, and pence—Coleridge must be pronounced to have possessed a very fair share. Writing his *Biographia Literaria*, after the lapse of many years, he can still tell us in it all the particulars about the commercial unsuccess of the

Watchman, the *Friend*, etc., as about his subscribers, his canvassers, what he lost, and how he lost it, etc. He can talk as acutely as any tradesman of the stock of paper left upon his hands, "each sheet of which *stood* him," he assures us, "in fivepence previous to its arrival at his printer's." He forgets not his "postages," or how he had to buy paper and pay for printing, "at least fifteen per cent. beyond what *the trade* would have paid." As little does he forget that he had to give "30 per cent., not of the net profits, but of the gross results," etc. Towards the end of the last volume, again, we find him able to use such expressions as these :—

"On the 200 which Parsons in Paternoster Row sells weekly, he gains eight shillings more than I do. . . . To be sure, I have been somewhat *fleeced* and overreached by my London publisher. . . . I rather think that the intention is to employ me as a mere *hackney*, without any *share of the profits.*"

Surely there is no want of "the mechanic understanding"—no ignorance of the ways of "the market" here. That, surely, is the very vernacular of both. As for his ill health and the opium it necessitated, into that we shall not pre-

sume to inquire; while, as for the want of fraudulent intention, and his general declaration in reference to Schelling, we shall content ourselves with reminding our readers of all that we know now, of his mis-references, of his groundless pretensions, of all his various other equivocal proceedings; and we shall contrast with this knowledge one other extract, at the same time that we desire very much that the reader would not content himself with this, but would refer to the original for full details. The extract (from chapter ix.) is this:—

"It would be but a mere act of justice to myself were I to warn my future readers that an identity of thought, or even similarity of phrase, will not be at all times a certain proof that the passage has been borrowed from Schelling, or that the conceptions were originally learned from him . . . many of the most striking resemblances—indeed, all the main and fundamental ideas—were born and matured in my mind before I had even seen a single page of the German philosopher; and I might indeed affirm, with truth, before the more important works of Schelling had been written, or at least made public. . . . God forbid that I should be suspected of a wish to enter into

a rivalry with Schelling for the honours so unequivocally his right. . . . It would be an act of high and almost criminal injustice to pass over in silence the name of Mr. Richard Saumarez . . . who needed only have taken his foundations somewhat deeper and wider to have superseded a considerable part of my labours."

We should not like to do injustice to the fine imaginative and æsthetic intellect of Coleridge; but are we to blame if we recognise here as well, the insincerity and subterfuge, and even craft, of a nature weak, and very weak, morally? Surely the introduction of Mr. Richard Saumarez, in such connexion, must clinch reflection. It does not discompose Coleridge, either, to know that his *translation* of Schelling constitutes these "labours," which Mr. Saumarez just missed "superseding;" and he winds up quite comfortably, as usual, with Grynæus and Salvator Rosa.

The truth probably is, that Coleridge was not properly a student of philosophy, but rather a reader *carptim.* It pleased him, all the same, to sun himself, as quite a Brobdingnagian student, in the eyes of the innocent reader, by significant smiling nods to the fact of metaphysic and psychology being his "hobby-horse." In like

manner it pleased him, too, to yield to such idle subjective fancies of the moment, as "I believe in the depth of my being that the three great works since the introduction of Christianity are Bacon's *Novum Organum*, Spinoza's *Ethica*, and Kant's *Kritik*;" and to console his conscience, when it gnawed, by such images as, "I have laid too many eggs in the hot sands of this wilderness, the world, with ostrich carelessness, and ostrich oblivion." It is quite in keeping that Spinoza's should have been previously called an "unwholesome book;" nor is it discrepant from such a nature that it should be very sharp on plagiarism in others, as in Hume and Aquinas, and about the line from Politian, and that it should whine pretentiously about taking "a refuge from bodily pain and mismanaged sensibility in abstruse researches." In all these things, plainly, it is no methodic student that we are made to see, but, on the contrary, a stranger, as it were, in a mysterious land that had roused the imagination rather than the understanding.

With faculty and law, mostly of mere receptivity and imaginative suggestion, what system of philosophy *could* Coleridge have thought out for himself? A procession of pictures he could give

—to more he was incompetent. How, in this *Biographia Literaria*, he flows on in an endless prosing and prosiness, a dreamy, egotistic, querulous, plaintive prosiness—on and on, and round and round—his topics, fancy and imagination,—Wordsworth, Southey, Lamb, the "lyrical ballads," the standards of criticism, Pope, Gray, Milton, Shakespeare, Plotinus, Proclus, Plato, Kant, Schelling—always in these last as if supporting a mighty weight, a something precious, mystic, unapproachable, of profound import, of prophetic power. Then, in addition to his anti-Bonaparte, anti-Jacobin, conservative politics, we have what he would call perhaps his transcendental trinitarianism, and his mystical, rapt transformations, or reformations, of baptism, and the other rites of the Church, conceived mostly in Greek. Anon we have quotations—and he perfectly knows the effect of these—from the works *virorum obscurorum.* Finally, he returns again to mumble and maunder about German philosophy, and that he had toiled it all out for himself; but that, in his laziness, he was magnanimous. Probably at bottom—we grieve to say so—it is a weak, self-indulgent, hollow nature this—a Harold Skimpole. It is his daughter that tells us in the preface,

"Some persons appear to have confounded the general courtesy and bland overflowing of his manners with the state of his affections, and because the feelings which prompted the former flitted over the surface of his heart, to suppose that the latter were flitting and superficial too." This is said for an opposite purpose; but still—and without gainsaying that purpose—we think it reveals features as well, quite specially characteristic of the class alluded to.

And this is what the analysis of mature life makes of the idol of youth! This is he who made epoch with us, and filled us with the enchantment of music, and emotion, and dream! This is he who wrote "Geneviève," and "Christabel," and the "Ancient Mariner," and it is of him who wrote them that cold analysis has drawn so desecrating a portrait! But is not this analysis too harsh, and might not admiration and affection limn the same features, but with warmer and with truer colours? May not original sensibility, may not bodily infirmity, may not adverse circumstances combine to kindle charity and transmute blame into sorrow —sorrow that a youth crowned with poetic buds so gorgeous, should have grown into no triumphant, but into a disappointing and disappointed

manhood—sorrow, but sorrow not unmingled still with gratitude even for what he gave? Be it so; but, for the sake of the future, neither let the due lesson fail. To that let us take, as an astringent, the bitter draught of Hegel:—

"Man, as he is outwardly—that is, in his actions (not, of course, in his mere bodily externality), so is he inwardly; if it is only inwardly—that is, only in designs, intentions, that he is virtuous, moral, etc., and his externality is not identical therewith, then is the one as hollow and empty as the other. . . . What a man does, that he is; and to the lying vanity that warms itself with the consciousness of inward excellence, let us oppose the Gospel-text, 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' . . . Our great men have willed that which they have done, and done that which they have willed. . . . A man of character is a man of understanding, who, as such, has definite objects before his eyes, and pursues these with firmness. He who wills something great must, as Goethe says, know how to restrict himself. He who, on the other hand, wills all, wills in effect nothing, and brings it to nothing. There is a number of interesting things in the world: Spanish poetry, chemistry, politics, music; this

is all very interesting, and we cannot take it ill of any one who occupies himself with these. In order, however, as an individual in a prescribed position, to bring something about, we must hold by what is definite, and not split up our strength in many directions."

Our general lesson, then, is now obvious. To the genius-airs, and genius-flights, and genius-indulgences of De Quincey and Coleridge, we oppose, as well the industry, the ingenuousness, and the modesty of Kant, as the silence, the self-restriction, and the iron toil of Hegel. We hope, too, that there are readers for whom other furtherances will not be wanting.

EBENEZER ELLIOTT, THE CORN-LAW RHYMER.

I.—THE BOY.

In the midst of a busy iron-manufacturing community, and in the centre of a green, light little room, " like a ship's cabin," with portraits of Cromwell and Washington on the wall, there sits a mild, submissive matron, smiling on a smart, good-looking boy beside her, while another boy hovers on the outskirts, as if in exile,—an exile sorrowfully felt to be deserved, but scarcely why.

It is Mrs. Elliott, with her clever son Giles, and her dull son Ebenezer, in the little parlour of their house in Masbro'.

The door opens abruptly to a determined, pugnacious-looking man, followed by another, apparently a Dissenting preacher. The latter, in truth, is Tommy Wright, pastor, preacher, and tinker,

of, or belonging to, Barnsley. The former is Mr. Elliott, named, out of irresistible compliment to his *charactéristique*, "Devil Elliott." "He comes," he says, "from the Border Elliotts, who stole alike from Scotch and English, no matter which."

Of politics is their converse. A rank Radical is the "Devil;" a red-hot Jacobin. Hark to him! Pointing to the figure of Washington on the wall, he shakes his sides with sardonic laughter "at the glorious victory of his Majesty's forces over the rebels at Bunker's Hill."

Politics exhausted, the good men now will catechise the boys. Giles, in the centre, can answer everything, and receives the plaudits both of tinker and "Devil." Poor Ebenezer, on the contrary, *snooled*, snubbed, crest-fallen, on the outskirts, can answer nothing.

Satchel on back, behold them now under weigh for school, Giles alert and willing, Ebenezer chilled and speculative. Why should *he* go to school? He does not envy Giles; he admires him beyond all bounds; for is he not beautiful as an angel—clever as an angel? But *he*—he is a dunce, and can learn nothing. Why should he go? The master will beat him if he stays away, perhaps. *Let* him! He hates school: he won't go. So he

makes his escape from Giles, and runs for cover to the open country.

What a change! He has passed the bounds of space and time, and entered a new world. The broad day receives him with extended arms; the air breathes on him with delight; the fields rise up to him; the flowers, the trees, the sunny groves, the birds, all welcome him. He is their playmate and their favourite. Ah! he is something *here*—he is something *now*.

So glides the day, but evening comes. The truant schoolboy skulks back into the dunce again, to hover doubtfully on the outskirts of the domestic circle; loving his mother, for she is gentle even to him; worshipping Giles, for he is handsomest of the handsome, the cleverest of the clever; and reverencing his father with an awful eye, for is he not the far-famed "Devil," rough with his tongue and ready with his hand?

The tender bud, however, will not *remain* naked. A husk grows—of self-will, surly, gruff, stiff—walling himself in to himself, with his beloved images of field and flower and tree. A sense of wrong, too, rises—fuel for the flame of indignation that will hereafter blaze.

So sensitive, true-hearted, warm-hearted, he

has been called "dunce" till he never doubts but he is one. In his soul of souls, he believes himself impervious to learning; and, in that belief, actually *is* impervious. Hardened by incessant reprehension, cowed by the brilliant Giles, awed by his terrible father—them and their whole world he abandons for the refuge of his own. He plays on the bosom of the earth by day; he skulks home at night, and creeps to bed, with images of terror shaking and unhinging his fine young nerves.

His brother and his schoolmates, however, must needs confess his stronger *something;* on all emergencies, they flock behind his *pluck.* From his mother comes the sensitiveness, from his father the pluck. But he owes the latter not a little also to the recalcitration and resistance natural to his erroneous position.

Such is the boy; but now the father, learning of his inattention to school, takes him thence, and puts him to work.

II.—THE YOUTH.

The change is emancipation. He has now work that he *can* do, and he *does* it. He is surrounded now by associates who have no idea

that he is dull, but acknowledge his worth rather. Nay, he is their master's son, and they look up to him. Even in book-learning, he is *their* superior. Most blessed is the change! At last he has found something he can do; at last he is respected.

The abasement he has been subjected to, however, has driven everything like pride of position out of him, and he cannot consider his fellow-workmen as inferiors. Nay, at first he regards them as superiors, and looks on them apprehensively. Every little sign of attention and respect that comes from them, he is peculiarly soft and open to. The most trifling mark of their very notice pleases and delights him. In such circumstances he becomes yielding; he cannot say them nay. Even when they are wrong, he has not the heart to say so. He cannot resist their invitations to the *York Keelman.* He is frank, warm-hearted, social; and the change of position, the new consideration that has fallen on him, renders him peculiarly susceptible of consent to the ways of those around him. He enjoys the new joy, not moderately, but immoderately; he gets drunk at times.

Still, in all this are the elements of much good. Self-respect is given to him, and, from resistance

to his own errors, come gradually depth, strěngth, and self-control. He is, after all, no drunkard, but a hard and steady workman. From his sixteenth to his twenty-third year he works for his father, as laboriously as any servant he has—and without wages, except a shilling or two of pocket-money. In the midst of the workshop, too, he has not forgotten "nature."

He sees a botanical book one day with plates of flowers so well executed, that he tries to touch "the mealiness." He learns to copy these plates; and, in his delight, is lifted "a foot above the inmates of the alehouse." In this way he gets attached to botany; roams far and wide for plants; and rapidly accumulates a large collection. The attention of every one is attracted with admiration to these labours; and at length—"an era" to poor Ebenezer—even the brilliant brother Giles applauds.

From loving flowers themselves, he gets to love descriptions of them; and thus is attracted to "The Seasons." Admiring descriptions, he too must try his hand; he perpetrates verse. More and more his own deficiencies open on him. He seeks to amend them; he resorts to books. He cannot penetrate and assimilate them by the

methods of others, but he can by his own; and at length, without knowing a single rule of grammar, "he can write English."

Great, then, have been the gains of the youth: strength, self-respect, learning, and articulation, together with much practical experience of the minds and manners of the working classes.

III.—THE YOUNG MAN.

As is frequently the lot of genius, this period seems to have been the most painful of all—the period of struggle, uncertainty, and unsuccess, of drudgery and despair.

He is now married, and happily; in business also, but unhappily. He is in company with "many partners;" and the concern is "bankrupt beyond redemption from the first." This he had either been too inexperienced to see, or too *blate*—too shy—to withdraw in time from. His partners seem to have been relations; and probably his sensitive and but recently uplifted nature was not so confirmed in manhood as to be capable of a "no." He was flattered by getting into business at all perhaps; and thought why should he, by any petty misgivings of his, hurt the feelings of such men as these?

Be that as it may, he passes several years here "in hopeless efforts and hopeless hopes," till, "losing every penny, he finds an asylum under the roof of his sisters-in-law." A cruel situation this of crushed pride and down-necked shame for such a man!

He flees, however, to "nature" again; he paints from her, writes from her; and has ample leisure to ruminate and digest the experience he has received.

IV.—THE MAN.

At the age of forty, he starts with a borrowed £150 in business again. He is active, he is provident, he succeeds—"turns £20 a day often," and accumulates a fortune.

He is a man now. He has turned all the past into food; it is incorporated with his person; he is taller, stronger, every way abler. He stands on his own legs; he sees with his own eyes. He can say Ay or No as it suits him. He is a man at last on his own account. In all the relations of life he is without a flaw. As a tradesman he is diligent, straightforward, and sagacious; as a citizen, full of public spirit, vigour, and sympathy; as a husband, spotless; as a father, everything that is tolerant, kind, and considerate.

He loves—and aims to be—the bold, the strong, the free, the independent. In his own *short*, abrupt fashion, he is roughly generous; and for all his gruffness, huskiness, and occasional fierceness, he is the most warm-hearted and benevolent of men. Withal, he is spontaneous and impetuous, no respecter of persons, irascible, rash, and hasty-handed, as well as hasty-worded.

His love of nature still abides with him, side by side with his indignation of wrong; and these are the key-notes—the warp and woof of him, both as a man and a writer. He speaks of the primrose and the bread-tax; of nature's bounty and man's injustice. With one hand he points to the abased forms of the poor; with the other to the wide domain of beauty which is their birthright. He has love and he has hate; and both he expresses vigorously.

He has a firm, decided attitude, and is not to be carried off his feet by the breath of any one. In every way, in fact, he has realized the possession of an effective practical manhood.

V.—THE TOP OF THE HILL.

From his fortieth to his fifty-sixth year, such is the aspect of the self and circumstances of Elliott.

The panic of 1837 breaks in on him, however, and robs him of "fully one-third of his savings." So, prudently collecting what is left, he retires from business, and in spite of his losses, and in spite of having, with the most thoughtful affection, "enabled his six boys to quit the nest," he finds that he carries with him no less a sum than £6000. These sixteen years, then, no one will call unfortunate.

With his usual sagacity, and notwithstanding the vaticinating croaks of his whole circle, he advantageously purchases a small property. He converts a wild fox-cover into a cultivated garden, and builds for himself, his wife, and his daughters, a house of simplicity and comfort.

No modern finery is admitted there: all is of the true household fabric—substantial, touchable, usable. He has a maid-servant and occasionally a man. He owns a St. Bernard dog. He possesses a Welsh pony, to which belong a small gig and harness—all three costing him £8, 10s. He has a piano: that, however, he holds to be no luxury, but the essential of the poorest. An uncaged canary wings and sings in his parlour, and settles often on his venerable head. No *ennui* seizes him; he is practical to the last: he reads,

he writes, he works in his garden ; he is seldom idle, and always happy. With the frankest courtesy and the freest hospitality, he receives as guests, from time to time, some of the best of his contemporaries. And thus, walking, driving, reading, writing, planting, gardening, happy in his friends, happy in his family, he enjoys, for thirteen years yet, the peace of a most golden setting.

But let us look now a little closer at the figure of this brave old warrior, reposing under the crimson west on the trophies of his triumphant manhood.

Reader! be not displeased to find that he was "not a man of large proportions, a true son of the forge, broad-set, strong, and muscular ;" that he was "not more than five feet seven inches ; of a slender make, and a bilious-nervous temperament ;" his mouth "pugnacious" and his features "harsh." Spirit laughs at matter; soul looks forth ever pityingly and mockingly from its wrappage of clay. Be not displeased with this ; but idealize it. Call him up, the slender man with the susceptible temperament. He is courteous and urbane. His grey eyes gleam with love, or lighten with indignation. There is resolution on his lip, and "scorn in his nostrils." He walks

with pride, and his feet would trample tyranny. Listen to him! No weak vanity, no spoiled egotism, no blown conceit! With a broad and blunt liberality, he sets himself at his price, or modestly below it. "Time," he says, "has developed in me *not genius*, but powers which exist in all men, and lie dormant in most." How plain he is! A blue waistcoat to his hips, blue trousers, blue coat, blue cap! A man for actual work is this, and no high-flyer; practical, matter-of-fact, and resolutely down on the ground.

No mysticism, no over-refinement, no super-subtlety are tolerated here. Nevertheless, love of nature and indignation of wrong have worked to some purpose in him; and the wings grown from these have borne him well. Like a true poet, he has seen "dim morning shake the rainbow from his plumage," and found—

> "The stars that give no accent to the wind
> Are golden odes and music to the mind."

Nor has he hesitated to chant, as if his armed foot beat the ground, "The song of battle" to the oppressor:—

> "Day, like our souls, is fiercely dark;
> What then? 'Tis day!
> We sleep no more. The cock crows—hark!
> To arms! Away!"

And oh, in the agonies of his grief for the sufferings of the world, how he calls and cries and shrieks to the All-father—

> "When wilt thou save the people?
> O God of mercy! when?
> The people, Lord, the people?
> Not thrones and crowns, but men!
> Flowers of thy heart, O God! are they!
> Let them not pass like weeds away,
> Their heritage a sunless day!
> God save the people!"

Such is the nature of his inspiration; no *chiar-oscur* of a curiously-intervolved and equivocal sublimity; but, fervour, fire, directness, pith. The man has energy; the writing, energy. There are truth, honesty, and a purpose in him. He is content to speak out warmly, strongly, clearly, the feelings that nature and her tribes—that man and his injustice—cause in him. He has taste, terseness, point; but he has not the sacred and peculiar *tone*—he has not the *aroma*—of the divine and separated bard, "whose soul is as a star, and dwells apart." He has not even the pomp, the long-drawn swell, the mighty period of our grander and greater prose-masters. Whether in verse or prose, he is simply a hard, firm, vigorous, and thoroughly earnest writer; nor is he eligible,

on the whole, whatever be his *prominence*, for any unusual *eminence* of place.

There is so much essential manhood in him, however, so much of the *stuff* of genius—that we do not abate him thus without a qualm. A little more excavation and scooping out of the natural imperviousness and opacity, of the natural saw-dust and timber, of the brain,—a little more initiation and instruction—might so easily have conferred on him not only Wordsworth's mystic intellection and occult utterance, but even the prophetic mantle of an Emerson or a Carlyle, that we grudge to place him lower than even the very highest of these.

However this be, not so much for his writing as for his manhood, it is that Ebenezer Elliott shall be memorable for ever. His worth lies in the life that he can fearlessly throw open to his fellows, rather than in the words that he has either rhymed or written. We cannot regret that he did rhyme. Many of his rhymes shall abide with us as amulets; nor shall our children's children willingly let them die. But after all we love better to hear him talk.

Grey-haired, with the dress, manners, and appearance we have described, we like to wander

with him over field and meadow, delighted to the core with the raciness of his fresh and characteristic speech; for, full of originality, piquancy, and point, we feel that it is the language of a genuine experience, thoroughly ruminated, digested, and assimilated. We like his prejudices even, for the crust without is generally indicative of the tenderness within.

How it contracts our lip to hear him exhort a friend, "Alter or omit the lines in your poem which refer to your detractors; why stand on your defence without occasion? Live them down or die them down!" Such swift, trenchant-like strokes but seldom fail him.

With what a large tolerance, but manly affection, he speaks of his sons! His eldest: "Perhaps a more simple-mannered unassuming man never lived. He is no poet, and yet there is a touch of the poetic in all he does or suffers. If he opens his snuff-box to a stranger, he spills the snuff, of course; and he gets on best when he stumbles." "Henry and Francis (as I wish them to do) are living on the interest of money earned by themselves, and increased by gifts from me." And so on with all the rest. On Edwin, the gentleman of the family, "a Tory of course," and

buying an ass, because it was gentlemanly to ride, he is particularly amusing, liberal, and large. The sunny geniality, the kind, open, frank, tolerant heart, denoted by all this, must be apparent to every one. There is no narrow sourness here, no sulkiness—all is provident, considerate, and affectionate.

Towards the close, he talks of his own health thus: "I shall recover, I am told. The truth is, I improve desperately. I suffer great pain, and after losing more than twenty-eight pounds in weight, I continue to lose weight at the rate of about one pound weekly. You cannot fatten calves in that way. If I am not removed suddenly, I shall last to April next." It is no weakling, no whiner, no whimperer, that can afford to jest thus; but a wise, chastened, and humble heart,—a manly and a gallant soul. In all his letters and recorded conversations, there is a rich and quaint and racy-tongued sagacity, an open tolerance of nature, a large and manly common sense.

O excellent old man! bravely didst thou struggle; and thy reward was victory. Long and pleasant was the red evening of thy days. Children numerous, virtuous, prosperous, received thy latest sighs; and thy grey hairs were laid with

honour in the dust. A picture, in fact, of such consummate success is rarely to be met with whether in the life of the man of letters or in that of the man of the world. Which of his contemporaries has realized the like? Behold him "tired, but self-sustained, like one who after hard labour reaches his home and rests on his own hill-top, envying no man, feeling that he is no longer wanted, that he has done his work; that he can die when God calls him, thankful that the battle is over, and the good time coming!"

May such lot be ours! May we, too, die as he, with the notes of the robin in our ears! May we, too, swan-like, sing as he--

"Brothers, I have done my best;
I am weary, let me rest.
Let me rest, but lay me low,
Where the hedge-side roses blow;
Where the winds a Maying go;
Where the little daisies grow!"

We must not close this paper without alluding to the little volume which has suggested our remarks.[1] The quarry from which we cut our statue cannot be concealed, and if justice induced no acknowledgment, policy would compel it.

[1] *The Life, Character, and Genius of Ebenezer Elliott, the Corn Law Rhymer.* By January Searle. London, Whittaker and Co.

The life of Elliott, by January Searle, is a most eloquent, kindly, and affectionate performance; where the sympathy of at least an equal, if not exactly a kindred spirit, warm but discriminating, sufficient to inspire but inefficient to mislead, kindles the subject with the true fire, and invests it with the most delightful interest. Peer greets peer with the most noble fervour, and the commonest reader is exalted and enlarged. The conduct of the work is exceedingly judicious: admitting not the firm drawn inferences of the biographer only, but the grounds of them also, it is rendered as valuable as interesting. In this, as in former writings of January Searle, there are sound criticism and keen analysis. And still do images, the freshest and the fairest, live to his presence; nor has he laid aside the knightly pen that touches all into the chastened gold and simple sunniness of the old romance.

Such passages as the following will show our meaning:--

"There is no mistaking the man: like the warriors of the old chivalry, wherever he appeared, he left the mark of his battle-axe behind him."

"His wild spirit never was entirely tamed;

and the spots and claws of the leopard are every where visible."

"No sooner do the dark aspects of humanity pass over his mind, than he bursts forth with passionate and vehement exclamation; and the calm heavens and the meek and beautiful earth are suddenly darkened and distorted with the fiery ashes of his wrath."

"He gathers fresh strength at every step; *and beats up the thunder from the hard highway.*"

"Every painful throb and every agony of the heart were familiar to his ear; and he reproduced them in melodies *which drop down into the soul like the tears of music.*"

"He would utter the finest things, one after another, with the throat of Ætna; scattering them about in blasts of fire and thunder. He was a sort of walking earthquake, clad in flowers and rainbows; one of the most beautiful and terrible of men."

We had marked other passages; but to *prove* the mineral fewer would suffice; and he who requires more has small skill in such geology.

FINIS.

EDINBURGH: T. CONSTABLE,
PRINTER TO THE QUEEN, AND TO THE UNIVERSITY

HANDBOOK

OF THE

HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

BY DR. ALBERT SCHWEGLER.

TRANSLATED AND ANNOTATED BY

JAMES H. STIRLING, LL.D.

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